

S100. d. 77. 2

IT is desired, that no Persons will offer to *sell* this Book, but (as it is freely given) first read it with serious Attention, and earnest Prayer to GOD for his Blessing upon it, as a Direction to heavenly Wisdom and Happiness; and then lend or give it to their Friends and Neighbours for the same kind Purposes.

N. B. It is given by the Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, only to be dispersed *gratis*, and that no worldly Gain whatsoever should be made thereof.

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THE
RELIGIOUS TRADESMAN;
 OR
 Plain and Serious
HINTS OF ADVICE
 FOR THE
TRADESMAN'S

Prudent and pious CONDUCT; from his
 Entrance into BUSINESS, to his
 leaving It off:

Contained under the Heads,

Of the Nature of a Life of Business, and Ob- ligations to it.	Of Justice.
Of choosing a Calling.	Of Truth, and
Of Prudence or Discre- tion.	Of Contentment, <i>as they</i> <i>relate to Trade.</i>
Of Diligence.	Of Religion.
	Of leaving our Call- ings.

It is a Book admirably fitted by its proper representation of the *Tradesman's* duties, and the close and warm enforcement of them upon the conscience, to do excellent service, under the blessing of God, to the shop and to the world.—The following sheets contain a rich treasure of wholesome instruction, such as every *Tradesman* should write upon his heart, and practice in his shop and family.

Recommendatory Preface by the Reverend ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

L O N D O N :
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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

*T*HE Reverend Mr. Richard Steele, a worthy Minister in the last century, published a Treatise entitled, The Tradesman's Calling; A book admirably fitted by its proper representation of the Tradesman's duties, and the close and warm enforcement of them upon the conscience, from the arguments of Scripture and Reason, to do excellent service (under the blessing of God) to the shop, and to the world. This piece is now very little known; the chief reason of which may possibly be, that its noble matter lies under the disadvantage of an antient name, and an antient dress: To relieve which objection, and, if it please God, to do a kindness to the trading world, by setting before them their duty and interest, and thereby preventing those present and future miseries, which negligence, injustice, and irreligion, bring upon mankind; a person into whose hands it fell, from a strong persuasion of its admirable tendency to these ends, determined, after several alterations had been made, to send it abroad afresh into the world.

As it is a pleasure to meet with any opportunity to assist the cause of Religion and Virtue, and being well satisfied that the following sheets contain a rich treasure of wholesome instruction, such as every Tradesman should write upon his heart, and practise in his shop and family, with the greatest readiness I lend my name to the piece; and heartily wish it could borrow much greater advantages, as to its perusal and usefulness, than I am capable of giving it by my recommendation.

As the age in which we live is much degenerated from the virtue and piety of our forefathers, I should be heartily glad if I might see the salvation of GOD, in a general repentance and reformation: And should this begin in the shop and the exchange, how wide and amazing would be its influence? No more would our eyes be witnesses of the base practices of over-reaching and various other iniquities; nor would our ears be so often shocked with the tremendous bankruptcy and ruin, brought by idleness, luxury, and vice, not only upon single persons, but whole families, left destitute and wretched for ever after.

That the following pages may be blest to these purposes, is the desire and prayer of the Readers

Hearty Well-wisher and Humble Servant,

Nottingham, Jan.

24th 1747.

ISAAC WATTS, D. D.



T H E

INTRODUCTION.

AS *Trade* and *Commerce* employ a very considerable part of mankind, an attempt to render the conduct of those that are engaged in it more happy and successful, will appear to be, at least, a benevolent undertaking; and to this end it is evident, that *moral* as well as *prudential* directions may contribute. Certainly, to discharge in a proper manner the respective duties of the common callings of life, which take up six parts of our time in *seven*, requires greater attention of mind than is usually paid to them, for the regular discharge of *their respective duties*; and may admit of more assistance than has been yet offered to the world in any treatise now extant: There is, indeed, an excellent piece which has met with considerable and deserved acceptance, called the *Complete English Tradesman* *, which I could wish were in the hands of all that are concerned to appear in that character with honour or success; but as it is chiefly employed in considerations of a *prudential* nature,

* In two Volumes, twelves, printed for C. RIVINGTON, 1738.

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nature, it leaves room for an attempt of the present kind.

Instead therefore of useless speculations, or perplexing controversies in religion, which neither enrich the mind, nor reform the manners of men; I shall endeavour to direct the conscientious Tradesman in the duties of his *daily calling*, wherein he is surrounded with manifold temptations and difficulties, and stands in need of all the assistance he can obtain from God or man—He hath the same depraved nature to bias him, and the same malicious spirit to tempt him, as others; and he hath a much greater variety of *trials* and *temptations* from the world, than either the Husbandman, Scholar, or Gentleman. The particular *circumstances* of trade, and the *duties* flowing from thence, are indeed too numerous to be contained in so small a tract as this; yet I doubt not, but the principles and rules here laid down, being faithfully applied to *particular cases*, will generally be found sufficient for his direction: Though after all it must be owned, that the religious fear of God, and a sincere love to our neighbour, will do more to *direct us* in many doubtful and critical cases, than can be expected from any treatise whatsoever.

Let me beg, that the Reader would take into serious and mature consideration the hints that are here suggested, and if he meets
with

The INTRODUCTION. vii

with any thing which recommends itself to his *conscience*, as agreeable to the laws of God, and the nature and reason of things, that he would not fail immediately to put it in *practice*. Surely, no one can be so absurd as to think it sufficient to appear religious on the Lord's-day, or to be serious in the devotions of the closet, and then leave conscience *asleep* all the intermediate time; since these religious duties were designed as the means of producing and maintaining those principles of wisdom and justice, virtue and goodness, which are to be in *continual exercise*; and the infinite Creator and Proprietor of the universe, claims our *constant obedience* to his laws, as well as our devout ascriptions of worship and adoration.

It may be fit to acquaint the world, that the substance of this piece is taken from a book entitled, *The Tradesman's Calling*; which though it has lain some time in obscurity, is thought by many judicious persons to be very deserving of the public regard. The Publisher could have wished it had been revised, and sent into the world by a more able hand; and the sense he had of its deficiencies, was the chief cause of its lying so long unpublished: but he does not absolutely despair of its being in some degree useful, since, as a learned writer observes, " Truth influ-
ences

viii *The* INTRODUCTION.

“ ences the mind of man more by its own
“ authority, evidence and excellency, than
“ by any ornaments of wit and eloquence
“ in which it may be drest.” And such
ornaments are in this case the less needful, as
the subjects are chiefly addressed to persons
of plain sense and understanding; if the
God of the spirits of all flesh, is pleased to
smile upon it so far as to render it effectual
to reform the practices, and improve the
tempers of those that read it, the Publisher
will have the full reward he hopes for,
from this essay of benevolence to his fellow-
beings; and a thousand encomiums on the
elegance of the composition, without these
effects, would afford him little satisfaction.
He has added some passages of *scripture* at
the conclusion of each subject, that they
might have the sanction of *divine authority*
to enforce them; firmly believing that,
however men may despise it, if ever the
blessed God is pleased to reform a sinful
world, He will honour His *own word* as the
instrument of producing such an happy
event.



THE
RELIGIOUS TRADERMAN.

CHAP. I.

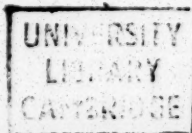
The Nature of a Life of Business, and
Obligations to it.

The Nature of man designed for action.—The Wisdom and Goodness of GOD visible in the variety of abilities and dispositions in men.—Business to be a constant employ.—Obligations to it from Nature and Reason: The command and appointment of GOD: Justice to society and families; Its advantage to ourselves. Reflections on the pleas for indolence, by the rich; on account of devotion; the unsuccessful; the incapable.—Advice to parents.—The folly of neglecting Religion, the great business of life.—Scriptures suited to the subject.

§ I. THE supreme felicity, and great
end of man, is to know, love,
and glorify GOD his Creator,
Redeemer and Benefactor (a):

But as we are beings endowed
with powers and faculties of body and mind,
fitted and designed for actions relative to our pre-
sent

(a) John xvii. 3.



2 *The Wisdom and Goodness of God*

sent state of being ; and are placed by divine providence in mutual dependance upon each other, by the perpetual return of wants, which of ourselves we are incapable of relieving or supplying ; both reason and religion require, that all, as they are able, should be *employed* in such a manner as may be beneficial to *themselves*, and the *society* to which they relate* : And a very considerable part of the beauty and excellence of the Christian Life consists in due affections and conduct with respect to the persons and things of the *present state*, and in acting upon principles of Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, and Integrity to one another.

The real and imaginary wants of Mankind have created great *Diversity* in their Employments ; Some are chiefly labouring to support the life, or restore the health of the Body.—Others to defend mens Persons or Estates, and secure or promote the private or public Peace and Prosperity.—Some to improve the mind in useful and entertaining Knowledge ; or in the more important concerns of Religion and Virtue, which though not always the most advantageous, yet are certainly not the least noble employments. While others, in vast variety, are contributing to the convenience and delight of their Brethren of Mankind.

And, surely, the Wisdom and Goodness of God deserve our reflection here, in *fitting* and *disposing* men to those various services, which are suited

* Heav'n formed each on other to depend,
As master, or as servant, or as friend ;
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
And builds on wants, and on defects of mind,
The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

POPE

suitable to the *necessities* and *comforts* of human life: Some are endowed with extensive knowledge; others with vigour and strength; God hath given to one a penetrating judgment; to another, a curious hand, or a strong arm: Some are disposed to travel abroad; others to manufactures at home; each conducing to the public good; and qualified for discharging the respective offices in which they are engaged. As in the *natural* body, every member and organ is placed in the situation most suitable to its office, and all are at ease and content; so in the political body, the great Governor of the Universe inclines men to chuse out of this great variety, what is most acceptable to themselves, and useful to the community; and renders those labours and employments tolerable and easy to some, which to others appear big with hardship and woe: The rich ought to remember that their *comforts* as much depend on the service of the poor, as the *support* of the poor does on their affluence or bounty: So that "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you (*b*);" this should induce them to treat the poor with *tenderness*, and reward them with *liberality*.

§ II. That every one who is capable of it, should be *constantly employed* in some useful station of life, appears a truth so evident that little need be said to support it. Few indeed are so worthless as to be *always* idle, but that we busy ourselves only *now* and *then*, as humour and fancy incline us, can never be sufficient to answer the end of our creation; for this it is necessary we should exert ourselves in some Business that may *fully employ our time*; and

B 2

that

(*b*) 1 Cor. xii. 21.

4 *The Wisdom and Goodness of God, &c.*

that it should be *our own proper business*; for Divine Wisdom censures those as *disorderly liveries* (c), who either *work not at all*, or are *Busybodies*, trifling intermeddlers in the affairs of others, to the neglect of their own; and requires that “they study to be quiet, and to do their own business (d).” The wise Governor of the universe has appointed to every one his *proper place and work*, and will rather reprove than reward those who are acting out of their own sphere. But as *pride* and *sloth* have many pleas, I shall endeavour to enforce the obligations to a life of useful activity, by observing,

1st, That the *nature and reason of things* require it. There are comparatively few whose circumstances are independent. Now it is highly unreasonable to live upon others without a mutual return of advantage. And to expect that sustenance should drop from the clouds, without labour and care of our own, is an absurdity so obvious and flagrant, that none are stupid enough to maintain it; yet their conduct is not much wiser, who pretend to live upon *providence* while they live in *sloth*, and do not exert themselves in some proper business for their own support. But let a person's circumstances be what they will, the God of nature, who doth nothing in vain, by having given us capacities and powers for action, plainly intimates, that it is our duty to *employ them* in a rational and useful manner. Indeed, *activity* is so natural and delightful to man, that if idleness had the sanction of a law to enforce it, no doubt many would willingly pay their fine for liberty to work.

2^d, It

(c) 2 Thess. iii. 11.

(d) 1 Thess. iv. 11.

Our Obligations to a Life of useful Activity. 5

2d, It is the *express command* and *appointment* of God. *Adam*, before and after his fall, was placed in a state of action. In innocency, the wisdom of God chose a calling for him: "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it (e)." "If a noble birth, as one observes, a great estate, a small family, and a mind fitted for contemplation, would excuse man from labour; none have so fair a plea for it as he." After the fall, when labour was more difficult to him and less profitable, he was enjoined, in the "sweat of his face to eat his bread, until he should return unto his dust (f)." The command of almighty God to all his posterity is, that "six days they should labour, and do all their work (g):" In this is plainly implied, that all should fill up their time with some proper employment, from one season of religious rest to another: For it is obvious to remark, that the obligation to labour *six* days, is expressed in as general terms, and is bound upon us by the same authority, as the religious observation of the *seventh*. Nor is the case changed under the gospel, by which men are commanded and exhorted in the "name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, with quietness to work, and to eat their own bread (h)." That his precepts might have greater force, he has given us his *own example*; for before his entrance into the ministerial office, we find him labouring in the carpenters trade (i): And it so divine a Person stooped to a mean calling to teach us humility, diligence

B 3

and

(e) Gen. ii. 15.

(f) Chap. iii. 19.

(g) Exod. xx. 9.

(h) 2 Thess. iii. 12.

(i) Mark vi. 3.

6 Our Obligations to a Life of useful Activity.

and industry, shall any who call him their Master, refuse to *imitate* him herein ! It is not indeed supposed that all should be employed in labours equally mean and servile ; but what is pleaded for is, that every one should fill up life in a manner becoming *reasonable* and *accountable* beings, and members *related to society*.

3d, *Justice to our families* and the *public* require it. The great Author of our natures, has implanted in every being, love and affection to their tender offspring, which excites them to study and promote their happiness ; but idleness and sloth obstruct those blessings by which the family might live comfortably, and be disposed of happily : And whatever profession of religion there may be, the sacred records warrant us to say, that “ if “ any provide not for his own, and especially for “ those of his own house, he hath denied the “ faith, and is worse than an infidel (k).” How unnatural is the sight, when by the slothfulness of the parent, the children are clothed with rags ! Or how can they rise up and call them blessed, who thus make them heirs to nothing but poverty and distress ?

Nor is the regard we owe to the *public* to be overlooked. None should stand as *cyphers* in their generation, but so employ themselves as to be *blessings* in it, that their absence may be sensibly felt. How many are employed to furnish us with the conveniences and necessities of life ; and how *unreasonable* is it to make *no returns* ? The industrious Bees drive the useless drones from their little commonwealth ; and indeed those deserve not the protection, that add not to the welfare of the public.

On

Our Obligations to a Life of useful Activity. 7

On these principles, and from a conviction that *idleness* was injurious to the constitutions and morals of men, and very unjust and mischievous to society, the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans* appointed Magistrates to see that no persons spent their time in sloth; and severely punished those that thus offended. It was the general Custom of the *Jews* to bring up their children to manual labour, how plentiful soever their circumstances were, or how polite soever their education was designed to be: On this Account we find the apostle *Paul*, who had a learned education, under the greatest of their Rabbi's, working as a *Tent-Maker* (1). The same custom is continued in other nations to this day.

4th, Our *own safety* and *comfort* much depend upon it. The busy person, like the bird upon the wing, escapes many of those snares to which the indolent are exposed. It is hardly possible that a person should continue absolutely unemployed for any long time; and he that is not doing what he ought, will be doing what he ought not; the destroyer of souls can hardly wish for a fairer mark at which to direct his temptations, than an idle person. The *sloth* of *Sodom* is represented as one cause of the *wickedness* of it (m); And *David's* criminal indulgence seems to have been preceeded by the same indisposition (n): But an honest diligence subdues that pride, lust, and sensuality, which are cherished by sloth and indolence; and *non vacat*, I am not at leisure, is sometimes a more powerful restraint from evil, than *non licet*, it is not lawful. What numbers have been cut off in the midst of life, or had their beings rendered uncomfortable while they lived, by the great variety of diseases which

B 4

sloth

(1) Acts xviii. 1—3. (m) Ezek. xvi. 49. (n) 2 Sam. xi. 2.

sloth and *inactivity* bring upon the human frame ; (as dropsies, consumptions, melancholy, and the like,) which according to all human views, might have been prevented by useful activity ? The difference of sloth and industry in the acquisition and enjoyment of the good things of life, is too evident to need any illustration here. From hence we may take occasion to reflect,

1. That an *indolent* life is *blameable*, whatever excuses may be made for it.

It is certainly wrong, that persons in *affluent circumstances in life*, should think themselves excused from *activity* and *employment*. This is to reflect on the *wisdom* of GOD, as if he required the *least* service of those to whom he hath committed *most* talents : And it shews great ignorance of the *proper use* of such gifts, and the best way of *relishing* and *enjoying* them. Superior advantages in life are chiefly valuable as they *give an opportunity* of serving GOD, and doing good in a more honourable and extensive way ; but their design is *perverted*, when they are made a plea for sloth and luxury. If your *own* condition does not require the improvement of your fortune, the wants of *others* do, and the welfare of your *soul* may render an employment highly expedient. A thousand vices are produced by idleness. The human mind without exercise, like standing water, soon grows corrupt ; and a life spent in the cheerful service of GOD, and usefulness to mankind, will doubtless yield a *more pleasant reflection* in the decline of years, or the prospect of death, than time *wasted* away in inactivity and doing nothing.

Devotion is sometimes pleaded in vindication of this ; but I fear it is seldom a just and sufficient excuse, even in the case of persons in an affluent state :

state: But it is particularly vain, when used by those whose circumstances in life, render an employment *necessary* for the *support* of themselves and their family. It is a gross absurdity, that any should think themselves excuseable, who neglect the proper duties of *social* and *relative* life, through an excessive application to the external duties of *religious* worship: Who live as if they were *all soul*, and had *no body* related to the things and persons of the present state; and permit their families and business to *languish* for want of their presence, while they are indulging the intemperate fervours of an indiscreet zeal, of an unseasonable and mistaken piety.

Nor is it a sufficient excuse that any have been hitherto *unsuccessful* in business. Let such exert themselves with vigour, and consider their disappointment as a motive to greater diligence and prudence, rather than a reason for *indolent despondency*. One attempt may succeed, though others have been fruitless. Instead, therefore, of *sitting down discouraged*, let persons in this case use care and diligence to *find out the cause* of their unsuccessfulness, and endeavour to correct it; whether it be imprudence, indolence, unskillfulness, credulity or vice: And having done this, let them endeavour to introduce themselves again into business, with greater caution, with more steady resolution and diligence, and with an humble dependence on God, the giver of wisdom, and fountain of happiness.

If *Inability* is pleaded, take care it be *real* and *not imaginary*. There is no person to whom God has given the exercise of reason, but may employ himself in *some way* or *other*; and an industrious mind will break through many difficulties, rather than *stand as a cypher* in the world. In-

deed if we are wholly disabled by infirmities, God himself gives a release from labour. Patience and submission to his will, are the proper duties of that state; which, however, it may and should be borne with patience, will always be considered an *affliction* by an active mind. It is to be feared, the cause of persons loitering away their lives very frequently is, that their purses are *too low* for high and honourable employments and their spirits *too high* for those that are mean: they would live without labour, and enjoy plenty without pains; and their *unwillingness* to action, and not their *inability*, is the true cause of an indolent life.

2. Let *parents* be persuaded to educate their children for a life of *business* and *usefulness*; let not such *noble* powers and faculties produce such *worthless* lives, as are a reproach to the human nature; for if you are *rich*, the wealth you give them without an employment, will only be *fuel* for their lusts; and make their present folly the more *conspicuous*, and their eternal ruin the more *inevitable*; as it is next to impossible, in a state of indolence, to enjoy the full means of gratifying the inordinate appetites and affections of depraved nature, without the inclination to comply with their solicitations. If you are *poor*, the injury you do to your children is irreparable; you direct them in the way to *shame* and *misery*, and betray the trust which God has *committed* to you; whereas by placing them in some honest calling, they might be happy in themselves, useful in the world, and respected by all about them.

Let the *young* be excited by these considerations to apply with spirit and resolution to acquire useful knowledge, that they may be fit for those employments by which they may credit their friends,

friends, and be serviceable to mankind: Though wisdom and knowledge be difficult to attain, and ease and pastime have a more enticing view at present; yet the fruits of *industry* in riper years, will abundantly recompence your present labour and self-denial: Folly and want are easy acquisitions, but wisdom and wealth are only to be procured under the blessing of heaven, by industry and care.

(2.) What egregious folly is it to neglect *religion*, the great business and end of life; and that in which the safety and happiness of our immortal soul is so intimately concerned? If *diligence* in common affairs is so important, if *negligence* there is so culpable, they are infinitely more so here. That the *soul* should be adorned with the moral image of God; that its beauty in this respect should grow; that by a sincere faith in Christ, and an humble repentance towards God, we should be made meet for final and everlasting glory; and the lively expectation thereof should grow into the full assurance of hope: These are objects that will repay the most assiduous application, the greatest diligence. This is a case so plain, that children, and almost Ideots, might seem capable of judging in it. In such a cause, we might expect to find *ardour* and *perseverance* even in the most sluggish minds, in those which no prospect of earthly honour or wealth can warm.

But how preposterous is it! These infinite concerns are *overlooked*, this important necessary business is *neglected*, not by the ignorant, the indolent and sluggish alone; but by the prudent and shrewd; by men of business, steadiness, and unwearied application. There are those that *rise up early*, and *lie down late*, that eat the bread of labour and care-
fulness

fulness for a little, it may be a very little, *temporary gain*, who cannot find a moment to think of God and their souls, though reason, conscience, and the word of God, assure them that the neglect must prove destructive of their eternal *happiness*. O ye prudent and toiling mortals ! Are the unsatisfying, transient enjoyments and honours of this life worth *so much* ; and is it of *no importance* that, when these things fail, you may be received to everlasting habitations ! Consider your ways and be wise. O may God teach us all to know the things that differ, and prefer those that are most excellent, and by the powerful energy of his Grace make us wise and happy for ever !

“ And Abel was a *keeper of sheep*, but Cain was a *tiller of the Ground*, *Gen. iv. 2.* 1 *Sam. xvi. 22.* and *xvii. 15.*

“ The sun riseth—Man goeth forth unto his *work*, and to his *labour*, until the evening, *Psal. civ. 22, 23.*

“ The *slothful* man roasteth not that which he took in hunting ; but the substance of a *diligent* man is precious, *Prov. xii. 27.*

“ In all *labour* there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth only to poverty, *Prov. xiv. 23.*

“ He that loveth *pleasure* shall be a poor man : He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich, *Prov. xxi. 17.*

“ By much *slothfulness* the building decays ; and through *idleness* of the hands the house drop-peth through, *Eccles. x. 18.*

“ Who can find a virtuous woman ?—She seeketh wool and flax, and *worketh* willingly with her hands.—She *riseth* also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household.—She layeth her *hands* to the spindle, and her *hands* hold

“ hold the distaff.—She *looked well* to the ways
 “ of her household, and eateth not the bread of
 “ *idleness*, &c. *Prov.* xxxi. 10—31.

“ Behold, this was the iniquity of *Sodom*, pride,
 “ fulness of bread, and abundance of *idleness* was
 “ in her, and in her daughters; neither did she
 “ strengthen the hands of the poor and needy,
 “ *Ezek.* xvi. 49.

“ There was a disciple named Dorcas; this wo-
 “ man was full of good works, and alms-deeds.
 “ —And all the widows stood by weeping, and
 “ shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas
 “ made while she was with them, *Acts* ix. 36—39.

“ You yourselves know that *these hands* have
 “ ministered to my necessities, and to them that
 “ were with me.—I have shewed you all things,
 “ how that *so labouring*, ye ought to support the
 “ weak; and to remember the words of our
 “ Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed
 “ to give than to receive, *Acts* xx. 34, 35.
 “ *Eph.* iv. 28.

“ Withal, they learn to be *idle*, wandering
 “ about from house to house; and not only idle,
 “ but tatlers also, and busy bodies, *1 Tim.* v. 13.

“ Let ours also learn to maintain *good works*
 “ (or honest trades, *Margin*) for necessary uses,
 “ that they be not unfruitful: These things are
 “ good and profitable unto men, &c. *Titus* iii.
 “ 8, 14.”



C H A P. II.

Of choosing a CALLING.

§ I. *The lawfulness of a calling to be attended to in the choice of it.—And its suitableness to the abilities of body and mind, education and circumstances.—Consideration recommended therein.—Respect to the advice of others.—And the interest of the soul.—Dependence upon divine providence.—And regard to a particular inclination.—Scriptures suitable.* § II. *Due dispositions and views, as necessary as a proper choice.—Religious principles.—Steady resolutions.—Humility and faithfulness.—The study of the sacred scriptures.—And prayer to Almighty GOD, recommended, &c.*

§. I. **H**AVING considered the obligations to a life of business, and advantages of it; the next thing that presents itself to us is, the proper choice of it. This, at first view, must appear to every one a momentous concern, as so much of the comfort and happiness of an after life depends upon it. As to children and youth, it is commonly under the direction of parents or guardians; but the inclination of the person to be disposed of is not to be disregarded. The directions necessary under this head may be comprised in these two, that the calling we choose be lawful and suitable.

(1.) Both

The prudent choice of a Calling. 15

(1.) Both the disposers and disposed must agree to choose a calling that is *lawful*. To do a sinful *act* is bad enough, but to make a *trade* of sin, and employ our lives in one continued scene of disobedience to God, is a condition that cannot be thought of without the utmost abhorrence, by any one, in whom the principles of virtue and religion are not wholly extinguished; as the *continual* curse of God must necessarily be attendant upon them. The prospect of gain may blind the eyes of men, and carry them on in such a course without reflecting; but it is often seen that the divine resentment follows them, even in this life, by *blasting* their hopes and aims, and causing wealth thus gotten by vanity to be *diminished* (o): but should this not be the case, God does not forget, nor lose the right to punish, those crimes, on which he does not animadvert in this world. It is a plain, though a lamentable case, that men are now disposed to take great liberties with their consciences, and make a light matter of religion, as if it was confined to a few outward acts of piety, without having any thing to do with their general conduct; in such an age it would be difficult to point out those callings that come under the character of *criminal*, without censure; yet every one must acknowledge that those employments are certainly *evil*, that tend to *lessen* the reverence and duty we owe to Almighty God; or *obstruct* the general good of mankind; that are either the *necessary* occasions of sin to ourselves, or the *certain incentives* to it in others.—Those only are *lawful* in which we can reasonable ask for the blessing of God, and expect his *favour* and *acceptance*. This indeed is

(o) Prov. xiii. 11.—ch. xxi. 6.—ch. xxii. 8.

16 *The prudent choice of a Calling.*

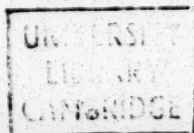
is the best rule we can form to ourselves by which to judge of every doubtful action. Not that every lawful calling promotes the happiness of every individual, for *soldiers* and public *executioners*, who destroy the lives of men, are nevertheless instruments of public good; and persons may sometimes *innocently trade* in those things, which others may *wickedly abuse*, as might be intanced in many callings.

(2.) The employment or calling we choose, must be *suitable* or *fit*. Rashness and negligence herein, has often been the ruin of particular persons, and sometimes a public mischief. Those who have capacities and endowments *above* their callings, grow uneasy and discontented in them. Those who have employments *above* their capacities, after some weak and unsuccessful attempts, are discouraged; and if they are placed in more exalted stations of life, render their weakness the more conspicuous, and prove a shame and reproach unto them.

Let therefore the *abilities* of body and mind, be considered.—As to the *mind*; never thrust one of a dull capacity, bad memory, shallow judgment, or ungovernable passions, into an ingenious, especially into a religious profession; for though some of mean abilities have proved useful in church and state, yet as that seldom happens, so the divine Goodness in making them *successful*, will not justify the folly and rashness of man, in making such an *unadvised* choice. The Almighty God may do what he *will*, we must do what we *ought*; that is, fit the means to the end, and for an ingenious calling, choose an ingenious person.—On the other hand, it is great pity to confine a bright genius to a sordid employment. This is
like

like thrusting those to the oar, that might sit at the helm. God, by giving to some excellent and large capacities, tacitly appoints them to employments suited thereto, if other circumstances concur; for his method of calling men now, is not by audible words, but by bestowing real and suitable gifts.—The employment should likewise be fitted to the strength of *Body*. A robust and healthy constitution, where the endowments of the mind are small, is fittest for a laborious calling; and those of weaker, and more tender constitutions, should be placed in easier stations of life.

Let the *education* and *circumstances* be regarded. A genteel or liberal *education*, directs to a genteel or liberal calling, if other things concur. A plain employment, very well suits a plain education; but it will require uncommon wisdom and humility, for persons of learning and ingenuity, to stoop to low and servile employments, and be easy in them. Those likewise who have been tenderly educated, should not be placed under too much severity, lest such new wine, being put into old bottles, it be spilt and lost.—The *circumstances* of persons are also to be considered in the choice of a calling. It is absurd to set those to follow a plow, who by the fortune they are to receive, might be qualified to fill the chair. But it is to be feared people more frequently err on the other side. Vanity and pride lead persons to choose for themselves, or those they are concerned for, callings superior to their substance, in hopes of some imaginary, fortuitous events, which seldom come to pass; upon this presumption they either enter into business upon a false foundation, and so *sink into ruin* at any considerable disappointment; or else for want of a capital to engage in trade, they



18 *The prudent choice of a Calling.*

they are obliged to remain in a state of *servitude* and *dependance* all their days.

In order to a happy choice, therefore,

1st, Let due *consideration* be used. It is highly absurd to fix upon such a weighty affair as a condition for life, without the serious exercise of *reason* and *thought*; and yet we too often find that humour and fancy are the guides that are chiefly consulted in this momentous concern. Persons promising themselves ease or honour, pleasure or gain in this or the other employment, rush into it, and, their promises exceeding the bound of reasonable expectation, and disappointing their hopes, they grow restless and weary of their choice. Consider then, is the calling I am about to choose *lawful* in itself, and *suitable* for me? have I means proportioned to the end, capacity sufficient to attain the knowledge of it; strength and patience to bear its burdens; and substance to support the expences? Otherwise, like the *foolish builder*, after you have laid the foundation, you will not be *able to finish*, and thereby expose yourself to sorrow and shame. If you are fitted for callings of different excellence, it is our wisdom and duty to choose that in which we may *most eminently* serve God, and the community.

2^d, Let faithful, *judicious* persons be consulted, especially of the *same* calling. They are the fittest judges in their own profession as they best know the conveniences and inconveniences attending it, and the qualifications requisite for it: great regard therefore should be had to their advice, supposing them judicious and faithful.—Let the young be persuaded to *submit their judgments* to persons of experience and fidelity, and steer their

their course by their advice. Then, should they be unsuccessful, this reflection will yield them support, "that they were not ruined by their own rashness;" and they will find persons ready to assist a man of *conduct* and *prudence* in his distress, who would despise the man of *humour* and *caprice*.

3d, Choose such a calling and place as may not be *dangerous to the mind*. There are some *callings* which are in themselves lawful, and sufficiently gainful, in which, nevertheless, as they are at present managed, none who regard the precious and immortal *soul*, would fix their children; because the *temptations* which attend them are so many and great, that it is next to impossible to be preserved from the contagion of vice and immorality in them.—There are *places* also, which on account of business would be deservedly preferred, and yet by the supineness and neglect of masters in the government of their families, and the infection of evil servants, who are the bane of youth, they are rendered equally destructive. Deal not worse by your children, than you would by the herd of the stall, or the sheep of the fold. Expose not their immortal souls to such eminent hazard for any momentary gain; for "what will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul (p)?" Let them be situated where God is reverently worshipped, and his day religiously observed; where the weakness and impetuosity of youthful dispositions, may be under a *wholesome restraint*, and they may be taught to live for time and eternity: For, permit me to say, that if their lives and manners are not regulated by reason and religion, they will be

20 *The prudent choice of a Calling.*

be as far from happiness in *this* world, as they are from the warrantable hopes of a *better*.

4th, Let the *divine providence* be acknowledged, by *earnest supplications* for direction and assistance. It is God that appointed the *bounds* and places of our *habitation*, that by a sense of our dependence upon him, we might be induced to *seek after* him (q). It is part of the reasonable homage which intelligent and dependent creatures owe to the supreme Creator and Governor of all, to acknowledge him in all their ways; in doing this we are allowed to hope that he will *direct our paths* (r); but in the neglect of it, as we have no right to expect the guidance or blessing of heaven, so it will be no wonder if we meet with disappointment and distress. God only knows all the temptations and difficulties, advantages and disadvantages of the several situations in life, and *our strength* and fitness to bear them. He has often directed the honest humble enquirer, sometimes by persons and means unknown and unthought of, into the way most conducive to his present comfort and future happiness. It is our best interest, as well as our proper duty, to leave him to “choose our inheritance for us (s).”

5th, In concurrence with the foregoing directions, let the person's *inclination* be consulted; which if it is strongly and reasonably fixed on any particular calling, is one method whereby we receive the direction of providence, and a good step to a proper choice: Persons generally make the best proficiency in, and most easily bear the inconveniences of, those employments and situations, to which their natural dispositions *incline* them.

“I would

(q) Acts xvii. 26. (r) Prov. iii. 6. (s) Psal. xlvii. 4.

" I would seek unto GOD, and unto GOD would
 " I commit my cause, Job v. 8.

" Then I proclaimed a fast, that we might
 " afflict ourselves before our GOD, to seek of
 " him a right way.—So we besought our GOD
 " for this, and he was intreated of us.—The
 " hand of our GOD is upon all them for good
 " that seek him ; but his power and his wrath is
 " against all them that forsake him, Ezra viii.
 " 21—23.

" Neither know we what to do, but our eyes
 " are up unto thee, 2 Chron. xx. 12.

" In the multitude of Counsellors there is safety,
 " Prov. xi. 14.

" Trust in the Lord with all thine heart ; and
 " lean not to thine own understanding.—Be not
 " wise in thine own eyes : Fear the Lord, and de-
 " part from evil, Prov. iii. 5, 7.

" A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord
 " directeth his steps, Prov. xvi. 9.

" I know, O Lord, that the way of man is
 " not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to
 " direct his steps, Jer. x. 23.

" Let ours also learn to maintain good works (or
 " profess honest trades, Margin) for necessary uses,
 " that they be not unfruitful, Tit. iii. 14.

" Let him that stole, steal no more ; but rather
 " let him labour working with his hands the thing
 " which is good ; that he may have to give to him
 " that needeth, Ephes. iv. 28.

" Wo unto him that buildeth his house by un-
 " righteousness, and his chambers by wrong, &c.
 " Jerem. xxii. 13.

" If ye will walk contrary to me—Then will
 " I also walk contrary to you, and will punish
 " you

" I would
 " Jerem. xlvi. 4.

22 *Religious Principles recommended.*

“ you yet seven times for your sins, &c. *Levit.*

“ xxvi. 21—28.

“ Wealth gotten by *vanity* shall be diminish-

“ ed ; but he that gathereth by labour shall in-

“ crease, *Prov.* xiii. 11.

“ Treasures of *wickedness* profit nothing, *Pr.* x. 2.

“ He that soweth *Iniquity*, shall reap *vanity*,

“ *Prov.* xxii. 8.

§ II. Proper *dispositions* and *views*, are equally necessary with a suitable choice of an employment. As we are beings, not governed by instinct as irrational creatures are, but possessed of reason, and directed in the exercise of it by a revelation from GOD ; it concerns us, that the *views* and *motives* of all our actions, and the *disposition* and *manner* in which they are conducted, be agreeable to the directions heaven has given to lead us in the paths of duty and happiness, and worthy of the reasonable natures with which we are endowed. Now to this end it is especially necessary that the mind be influenced and directed by the principles of *religion*. We may justly impute the miscarriage of thousands, to their unadvised and irreligious introduction into life ; they go to Universities and Trades, without any sense of duty or danger, and being unarmed, are soon surprized by those temptations with which an evil world is filled, and which a depraved nature is too ready to embrace, to their utter ruin and destruction. To prevent this, labour after a *true understanding* of the christian religion, and regulate your *tempers* and *conduct* by it in every scene of life.

1. Let a sincere *love* and *reverence* of GOD, and desire of his *acceptance* and *favour* through Christ Jesus, be the governing spring and motive of all

your

your actions. When the mind is *devoted to God*, and *bent on pleasing him*, we have the strongest security against present guilt and folly, and future misery and punishment. If we sincerely serve him, he will surely bless us; He will interest himself in our concerns, support us under our difficulties, give us the direction of his wisdom, and the consolations of his grace, and preserve us from a thousand follies and miseries by which those are overtaken, who make *worldly gain*, or their *own lusts and vicious appetites*, the governing principles of their lives. Believe it, Sirs, it is as much your interest as your duty, to be early and truly religious, and to "remember your creator in your youth (t)." It is this for which you were *created and redeemed*, and are *supported and maintained* in life; and which the Majesty of heaven claims of you as his *due*. Let the business of your callings be prosecuted, "not with eye service as pleasing men *only*, but as the servants of Christ, with good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not to men (u)." This will enoble the meanest employment, and secure your highest end and truest happiness, whatever your success may be in other respects *.

2. In dependence upon the help of God, let your religious principles be accompanied with
steady

(t) Eccles. xii. 1.

(u) Ephes. vi. 6, 7.

* Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee:
A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

HERBERT.

Steady resolutions. Temptations and difficulties unknown before, attend *every new scene* of life, which soon overcome the unprepared and irresolute mind; but if you discern the hook as well as the bait, and consider the consequences as well as the incentives to evil, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you may escape. Of all temptations to which the young are exposed, none is more fatal and pernicious than *evil company*. Such are to be found every where, who, like the fallen angels, having revolted from their allegiance to God, endeavour to *draw others* into the same guilt and condemnation with themselves. Begin, therefore, no friendship with any, until you have a *worthy* character of them from a *judicious* hand, or have had a sufficient time and opportunity to be satisfied of their seriousness, from your own observation: Let not *former* acquaintance only be thought a sufficient foundation for *after* friendship; for he might be very innocent at school, who is now very vicious and profane. Let no accomplishments of wit or learning, breeding or fortune, engage your heart to an intimacy with any who *despise* or *ridicule* a life of serious religion and strict virtue; for the more agreeable they are in other respects, so much the more fatal is their converse likely to be: Herein you must be *resolute*; two or three positive denials will free you from their solicitations, whereas easiness and compliance will strengthen their importunity, and when once you are intangled in the snare of evil company, you will find it very difficult to disengage yourself: If you are sometimes forced, on account of business or relation to converse with persons of this character, let it ever be with a *prudent*

refer -

reservedness; and if you at any time perceive your mind begin to fluctuate, and your zeal for religion abate by the sneers of folly and profaneness, seriously inspect the word of God, and see what infinite wisdom dictates as the duty and happiness of man, and consider which it is best to follow, the judgment of God, or that of blind and deluded sinners.—Observe whether holiness and virtue be any more than the real and vital influence and practice of that religion which they *themselves*, however, vainly profess to believe.—Consider whether in the prospect of *death* and at the day of *judgment*, they will not curse themselves and their own folly, for the neglect of that religion which they now impiously and madly deride; and then think whether he does not deserve to perish, who will *forsake* his God, his duty, and his best interest, for the sneers of such mad-men; enquire therefore after the prudent, the wise, and religious of your age, and converse with them; *for he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed* (s).

Maintain also a *resolute* industry under the *labours* and *difficulties* of your callings. Time and use will make that easy and tolerable, which at first appears difficult and burthen some. The powers of the body and mind *enlarge* and *strengthen* by practice, and with ease and pleasure perform those things, which once were thought most grievous. Having therefore a tolerable capacity for your business, resolve to apply to it with *firmness* of mind.—Nor be discouraged if you meet with some *severities* to which you have not been accustomed;

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ed;

(s) Prov. xiii. 20.

26 *Humility and Fidelity enforced.*

ed; as stern and angry looks, harsh words, or unkind usage; divine providence permits these things to humble that pride, and tame that wantonness, to which youth is prone: Therefore patiently and chearfully *submit* to what is sufferable in your calling, and still *hope* that peace and satisfaction will succeed toil and trouble.

3. Particularly let me recommend to you *humility* and *faithfulness*, as most necessary to procure esteem from those you serve, and respect from all mankind.

Humility will make you *easy* and *contented* in every condition of life; you will then be ready to be commanded; easy to be pleased; hard to be provoked; and generally beloved. An humble mind thinks every good it receives *more* than it deserves, and every evil *less*: It will not think itself too great or too good to stoop to the *meanest* services of an honest employment; nor be wanting in a *modest* and *respectful* behaviour to others. You will not then be *disputing* when you should obey; *fretting* when you should submit; *envying* those you should respect, or *contemning* those you should embrace. These are the consequences of pride of heart; a disposition which will make you hateful to God, disrespected of men, and uneasy to yourselves, every labour will be thought too much, every reproof too galling, and every week a year, until the time of servitude expires, and then you will carry your *chain* with you, for what liberty can he have that is a *slave* to his pride and passions?

Fidelity is another amiable disposition, which should be ever cultivated: Be true and sincere in your *words*. Let lying and dissimulation be flunnd with the greatest abhorrence, as a vice
that

that is destructive to all friendship and converse among men, by taking away that mutual confidence which is the very bond of society ; and is the sure characteristic of a mean and abandoned mind, wherever it is indulged (*t*). Let this therefore be your resolution at all times, and in all cases, to *speak the truth* whatever it costs you.

Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie ;

The fault that needs it most grows two thereby.

HERBERT.

You will find, a fault *honestly confessed* will be attended with a much readier pardon, and preserve a much better character, than when excused or denied with *a lie*, which at best will hide it *but for a moment* (*u*).—Let your *Fidelity* extend to *deeds* as well as words. Be punctually faithful and just in every thing you are entrusted with. Diminish not the *substance*, divulge not the *secrets* of those you serve, upon any pretence whatsoever. Then, though your skill and parts may fall short of expectation, your *faithfulness* will procure you love and esteem. A true heart will make amends for a weak head, or a slow hand. Natural weakness will be pitied and pardoned, but falseness and fraud are exceeding odious to God and man. Whatever, therefore, your necessities or temptations may be, never transgress the rules of *justice* and *truth*, nor imagine that any degree of skill or dexterity will recommend you in the world without them.

4. Let the *study of the sacred scriptures* constantly employ some part of your leisure hours.

C 2

These

(*t*) Rev. xxi. 8, 27. Chap. xxii. 15. Prov. xix. 9.

(*u*) Prov. xii. 19.

28 *The study of the sacred scriptures,*

These are the surest guides to duty and happiness. The mind of the blessed God is herein laid open to man, to preserve him from the worst of evils, and to direct him to the highest good, and shew him the thoughts of his heart towards him for ever. Some parts abound with the most entertaining histories, which are the more instructive, as they not only relate the *external* actions of men, but the *internal* motives from whence they proceeded, free from all fiction and falshood. Here we are presented with a system of the most refined morality, founded upon the most rational and exalted conceptions of God; and enforced by the most awful and interesting sanctions.—They are admirably contrived (with God's blessing) to heal the conscience; to purify, to comfort, to ennoble the Soul; to inspire it with principles of virtue and goodness, and strengthen and confirm it in the practice of it: In a word, they are able to make us *wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (w)*. When your minds are formed capable of relishing the pleasures and purity of these *sacred volumes*, a caution will be less necessary against delight in those loose and immoral writings which swarm in the present day; which, however celebrated for wit and politeness, tend to poison the heart, corrupt the fancy, vitiate the affections; and for one useful lesson that can be learned from them, are big with a thousand ills.

5. Let humble, earnest *prayer to God* for his grace and favour, be as the constant breath of your souls: Never think that good resolutions will secure you from *moral* evil, nor labour and skill from *natural* evil, without the concurrence of Heaven: Without this, the most excellent parts,
the

the wisest instructors, and the most gainful employments, can never ensure success. The frequent miscarriages of those who have been every way promising, plainly shew that God *stands for something*, and whatever advantages men may be possessed of, all are but cyphers without *his blessing*; which those that desire to enjoy, must use this method to obtain.—This is not only necessary at the entrance into business, but in all *successive* seasons of life; because we constantly depend on God for the continuance of present blessings, as well as those we hope for in futurity. *Morning and evening prayer*, are as the key to open the mercies of the day, and shut out the dangers of the night, and therefore be constant and sincere in the practice of it; and let not the success of your prayers be obstructed by the irreligion of your lives; for “if you regard iniquity in your hearts, the Lord will not hear your prayers (x),” nor accept your persons.

Thus having chosen a *lawful* calling in a *religious* family,—having your minds influenced by the *principles* of religion,—and your resolutions *steady* (through divine grace) for the practice of it,—making the *holy scriptures* your study and guide,—and seeking the blessing of heaven by *serious prayer* to God; you may comfortably enter upon, and vigorously pursue the duties of your callings: Some assistance for the regular and religious discharge of which, is the design of the following Essays.

“O that there were such an heart in them
“that they would *fear me*, and keep all my *com-*
“*mandments* always, that it might be well with
“them.”

C 3

(x) Psal. lxi. 18.

“ them.—Ye shall observe to do as the Lord your
 “ God hath commanded you: You shall not
 “ *turn aside* to the right hand, or to the left.—
 “ You shall walk in *all the ways* which the Lord
 “ your God hath commanded you, that ye may
 “ live, and that it may be *well with you*, and that
 “ ye may prolong your days, *Deut. v. 29—33.*

“ Now therefore fear the Lord, and *serve him*
 “ in sincerity and truth.—And if it seem evil unto
 “ you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom
 “ you will serve.—And the people answered and
 “ said, God forbid that we should *forsake* the
 “ Lord, *Joshua xxiv. 14—16.*

“ What man is he that desireth life, and lov-
 “ eth many days, that he may see good?—Keep
 “ thy *tongue* from evil, and thy *lips* from speak-
 “ ing guile.—Depart from *evil*, and do *good*;
 “ seek peace and pursue it, *Psal. xxxiv. 12—14.*

“ My son, if sinners entice thee, *consent thou not.*
 “ —Walk not thou in the way *with them*, refrain
 “ thy foot from their path, &c. *Prov. i. 10, 15.*

“ My son, forget not my law; but let *thine*
 “ *heart* keep my commandments.—Let not
 “ mercy and truth forsake thee; write them upon
 “ the table of thine heart.—So shalt thou find
 “ *favour* and *good understanding* in the sight of
 “ God and man. *Prov. iii. 1—4.*

“ Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore
 “ *get wisdom*; and with all thy getting, *get un-*
 “ *derstanding.*—Exalt her, and she shall promote
 “ thee: She shall bring thee to honour when
 “ thou dost embrace her.—She shall give to thine
 “ head an ornament of grace: A crown of glory
 “ shall she deliver to thee. Take fast hold of
 “ *instruction*, let her not go; keep her for she is
 “ thy life.—Enter not into the path of the *wicked*,
 “ and

“ and go not into the way of *evil men*.—Avoid
 “ it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.—
 “ *Ponder* the path of thy feet, and let all thy
 “ ways be *established*, &c. *Prov.* iv. 7—27.

“ And thou, Solomon *my son*, know thou the
 “ GOD of thy father, and serve him with a per-
 “ fect heart, and with a willing mind; for the
 “ Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth
 “ all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou
 “ *seek him*, he will be found of thee; but if thou
 “ *forsake him*, he will cast thee off for ever,
 “ *1 Chron.* xxviii. 9.

“ Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our
 “ conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,
 “ not with fleshly wisdom, but by the *grace*
 “ of GOD, we have had our conversation in the
 “ world, *2 Cor.* i. 2.

“ Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righte-
 “ ousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that
 “ call on the Lord out of a pure heart, *2 Tim.*
 “ ii. 22.

“ Young men likewise exhort to be *sober-mind-*
 “ *ed*, *Tit.* ii. 6.”

C H A P. III.

Of Prudence or Discretion.

§ I. *The nature and advantages of pru-*
dence. § II. *The cases in which it should*
be especially exercised, 1. *In obtaining a full*
knowledge of our callings.—2. *In the*
prudent choice of the circumstances thereof.

—3. By *due deliberation in affairs of importance*.—4. In *proportioning business to our abilities*.—5. In *regulating our expences thereby*.—6. By *a frequent inspection into the state of our affairs*.—7. In *governing those passions to which we are most exposed*.—8. In *a due consideration of the contingencies of trade*.—9. In *avoiding those methods which have ruined others*.—10. In *disposing the common business of life in suberviency to the duties of religion*.—§ III. *The neglect of prudence censured*.—*Means to obtain it*.—*A caution concerning it*.—*Scriptures relative thereto*.

I. **T**HE first thing necessary for a happy progress in business, is *prudence or discretion*. This, as it relates to trade, is an habit of mind enabling us to conduct our affairs in the wisest and best manner; or in other words, it is pursuing the *proper end*, by the *best means*, and in the *fittest time*. It is not that *serpentine craft*, which lies in wait to captivate the unwary, impose upon the credulous, and over-reach the weak understanding, and which teaches men to increase their wealth by injustice and fraud: God has given to no man superior wisdom or skill, to be directed to ends so contrary to his own nature and will, and the general good of mankind: But it is that *honest wisdom*, which is consistent with a good conscience, and an ornament to it. *Prudence* is subtilty refined from all base and unjust views, as subtilty is wisdom corrupted by them. *Wisdom*,
like

like light, is pleasant to behold; it quickens the spirits, disposes the mind to a chearful activity, and make the passages of life clear and open; under God, it enables us to acquire and enjoy many advantages we could not otherwise attain; and frees from many evils and inconveniences to which we are liable. Whatever *good* arises from deliberate advice, sagacious foresight, stable resolution, and orderly conduct; wisdom confers: *Whatever evils* proceed from blind ignorance, false presumption, unwary credulity, precipitate rashness, and unsteady purposes; wisdom prevents: it begets in us the reasonable hope of success; and quiets the heart in the want of it. **GOD** having given to man a *considering mind*, sagacity and foresight, which he has denied to other creatures. They who act foolishly so far degrade the man, and resemble the brute: And, many are ruined by their own *indiscretion* and *folly*, without any other visible means than that they were themselves rash, wilful, or weak. But when our intentions are good and the means proper, we may hope that all-wise goodness will prosper us, and our success will then be doubly pleasant: Or, if we are disappointed, we shall disarm the affliction of what makes the deepest wound, the reflection that it was procured by our own folly. It is not supposed, that our *wisdom* and *prudence* can controul the events of divine providence, or make our dependance upon the blessed God unnecessary: But it will hinder us from being our own destroyers, and is the *means* which the great Governor of the world uses to bestow prosperity and happiness, where he is disposed to vouchsafe the enjoyment of them. A *considerate* head is often more successful than the *laborious* hand;

though both should be united in most employments.

II. Having considered the *nature* and *advantages* of prudence and discretion; we come now to instance the *particulars* wherein the Tradesman is called to the exercise of it, namely,

1. *In getting a full insight into his calling*; so as to know all the parts, and lawful arts and methods of it. The nature and quality of the *commodities* he deals in; proper times and places for buying and vending of them; the quantities of each that are most likely to produce advantage; the best method and art of manufacturing goods and the certain *nostrums* which are in most callings, and on which much of the success of them depends: These, and every other part, should be well studied, and fully understood. Leave it to others to pride themselves in the knowledge of callings foreign to their own; or to be curiously prying into the conduct or concerns of others; and remember that "the wisdom of the prudent" is to understand his *own way*." Your trade or calling is your proper province, for the improvement of which your mind and capacities should be employed; and neither God nor man will condemn you for inexperience in the business of others.—Let the time of your *apprenticeship* be carefully improved to this end: Treasure up all the *knowledge* you can attain by observation and instruction, and never be ashamed to continue learning any honest skill; for no fortune or application will support a man who is remarkably *defective in knowledge*. Your success is likely to be that of a rich vessel guided by an unskilful Pilot, in danger soon to be shipwreckt and lost.—On the other hand all *masters* should make conscience,

ence, honestly and faithfully to *instruct* their apprentices in all the lawful and gainful mysteries of their callings. This they are bound to do by their own agreement, and by all the rules of justice and honour.

2d, *In the prudent choice of the several circumstances of trade.*

For *Time*. Choose that which is most suitable for your business; "for to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose:" And among the rest, "a time to buy, and a time to sell (y)." which every wise Tradesman will observe. The future contingencies of business, and the rise and fall of the value of commodities, often depend upon such uncertain or unknown causes, that the deepest penetration is not able to fathom; but to buy goods when they are cheap, and sell them when they are growing dear; and at all times to be cautious of *over-charging* yourselves with dear or changeable goods, are maxims of prudence that never vary. Futurity is hid from us, but *discretion* is given to direct us, and those of the best discernment and sagacity are most likely to be successful.

For *Place*. Prudence will direct the Tradesman to consider which is most *suitable* and proper for his calling, and fix there. The conveniences of his family must give way to the conveniences of his business, and his fancy be regulated by his judgment in this affair. That place may be exceeding proper and advantageous for one employment, which persons of a different one must starve in; and a fine house, or a pleasant situation, or even a small rent, will not make amends for the want of customers.

For

(y) Ecclef. iii. 1.

For *Persons* Great prudence is necessary in the choice of these. First, *Whom to trust*; for it is not the metal that glitters most, that is always the richest; men are often deceitful, and too many make it their business to deceive, and enrich themselves with the spoils of the unwary and credulous. It is better, therefore, to be at the pains of a diligent enquiry after their abilities for the trust which we repose in them; than endure the grief of sad experience that we were mistaken in our apprehensions concerning them. Certain it is, that as there is prudence in trusting some, and charity in trusting others; so there are many whom it is neither prudence nor charity to trust at all.—*Whom to deal with*; to wit, with men of conscience, or at least of common honesty; for these may be relied upon with more security than others, and it is at all times more creditable to correspond with men of virtue than with knaves. Common fame with generally acquaint you who and where they are.—Lastly, *Whom to be familiar with*. For though we should be friendly to all, yet familiar only with a few; and they should be such as we may either receive good from, or do good unto: And even of these not too many; for the Tradesman's employment will not allow him time sufficient for performing the necessary offices of friendship to a great number. Let therefore the wise and prudent, the virtuous and good, be the persons of your intimacy and choice; for nothing has a greater influence on our present and future happiness or misery, than our *chosen* companions, as was before observed. “He that walketh with
“wise men shall be wise, but a companion of
“fools shall be destroyed (2).”

3d, This *prudence* should appear in using *mature deliberation* in affairs of importance. It is too visible that even men of ingenuity are often ruined by their *rashness*. Not considering the circumstances that are necessary to direct them in a proper conduct, nor viewing the consequences that flow from them, they are carried on by a plausible appearance of things or a hasty impetuosity of spirit, to the irretrievable ruin of themselves and families; fancy or passion, not reason and judgment, being the guides of their actions.—Others lose their opportunities of advantage by an unsettled, *dilatory* temper of mind, suspending their determinations till the proper season of acting is past. Due *deliberation* is therefore recommended, according to the importance and difficulty of the affair, and the limits of time it will admit of. If the case will allow of it, take a night's time to think of it, for that which is weighed over night, and reviewed in the morning, will be in some degree ripe for a judicious resolution. Indeed, as to trifling concerns it is childish and unnecessary to spend much time in determining concerning them; but of the two, a circumspect slowness in words and actions, is preferable to too much speed, as being less dangerous and hurtful.

4th, In *proportioning* the affairs of your trade to your *abilities*.

Of *Mind*. So as not to overcharge your *understanding* or *memory*: The mind of man, like a spring overstretched, loses its vigour: A ship that is well built, rigged and balanced, will carry a heavy burden; but if overladen it sinks: The capacities of some are stronger and larger than others, but none are infinite: And, therefore,
when

when you are so far overburdened with business, as to unfit you for the service of God, and the enjoyment of yourselves; when you can neither eat, nor sleep, nor be chearful, nor pray, it is time to abate, and draw your business into less compass,

Of Body. That you undertake no more, than the *strength* of that is able to perform; for this usually proceeds from covetousness, which is grasping at every thing; it makes men slaves in their callings; and either injures those that employ them by disappointments, or themselves by too much labour; thereby disturbing the peace of their minds, and impairing their health and strength. But let such remember that God and an eternal world call for some proportion of time and vigour of spirits; and that our bodies were designed to be “the temples of the holy Ghost (a),” and not drudges and slaves to the world: And as divine providence seldom makes it necessary for any thus to *labour in the very fire*, so he can cause it to be *for very vanity*, to those whose avarice prompts them thereto.

Of Estate. That you launch out no farther than you can feel ground under you: For though in some cases where the gain is certain or extremely probable, it may be lawful and prudent for persons to *enlarge* their stock and trade beyond the limits of their own foundation; yet every wise man will be *very cautious* in this matter; and I do not see how an honest man can answer it to God and his own conscience to go far this way, without acquainting his creditors before hand with the nature of his adventure, and gaining their consent; for unexpected losses and disappointments may happen; and what right have you to endanger the ruin of others,

(a) 1 Cor. iii. 16.

others, or at least their sustaining a considerable damage without their *own consent*? Pride or covetousness, are usually the motives to these hazardous enterprizes, and should be watched against by every *prudent* Tradesman; For as that water will turn one mill briskly round, which will cause two to go heavily; so that credit with which a person may chearfully carry on a moderate trade, will fill the mind with confusion and anxiety, when it is extended to a greater degree: The story often ends sadly, and he that was not contented to trade with *his own* stock, must be glad to live upon *another's* charity.

5th, In *regulating your expences* by your *abilities*. As men should not, on the one hand, from a sordid disposition, live too much *below* their incomes, and deprive themselves and families of what may contribute to the comforts of life; so, on the other, great caution should be used that their expences *do not exceed* their due proportion; for without the gift of prophecy it is easy to foretel the unhappy consequence of such a conduct. “*Expensive living is a kind of slow fever that preys upon the spirits and vitals of the Tradesman, and when it is considerably encreased is as fatal, and as sure to kill: It feeds upon the two most essential branches of his trade, his credit, and his cash; whereby the languishing Tradesman is overwhelmed.—There is a load of pride upon the temper of the nation, which, notwithstanding all the inconveniences of trade, prompts people to a profusion in their expences, that I think may very properly be called a plague upon them; the poor will live like the rich, and the rich like the great, and the great like the greatest; and thus the nation runs on in a kind*”
 “ of

“ of distraction at this time; and *where it will end, time will discover* *.” Some are such slaves to their *appetites*, that the belly devours what the head and hands have laboured for.—The pride of others, in the expensiveness of their *houses* and *furniture*; the costliness of *apparel* for themselves, their wives or children; or the number and luxury of their *entertainments*; destroy their substance, and leave their creditors and workmen exclaiming against their injustice and extravagance; and multitudes are continually ruined by the excessive love of *pleasure*, which necessarily produces expences of many sorts. The Tradesman will find all his resolution little enough to withstand the torrent of this evil: But *prudence* will teach him to live rather below, than above his income, not knowing what casualties and disappointments futurity may produce. “ He that begins to live “ as he should end, will soon end worse than he “ began.”

6th, *Prudence* will direct the Tradesman to a *frequent inspection into the state* of his affairs; that he may know whether, and how much he thrives or languishes therein. This is especially necessary with respect to your *souls*; and he must live very uncomfortably, or be a very bankrupt in religion who neglects it. But it is of use also in *temporal* concerns; and to this end a *regular method* should be kept in your books of account, that you may readily and certainly view the posture of your affairs. If you find that you *improve* in your way, this will afford you satisfaction and pleasure, and should excite your gratitude to God for his goodness, in blessing your labours. If you perceive things to be *at a stand*, you will be quickened to
greater

* Compleat English Trademan, Vol. I. Chap. 10.

greater frugality and industry before it is too late. And if you are *declining* in your estate, it will oblige you to search for the cause of your decay, to examine what excess or imprudence you are chargeable with, and rectify your conduct for the future; and especially to enquire whether any criminal conduct towards God, the neglect of his day, or worship; uncharitableness to the poor, or injustice to others; does not provoke the divine providence to blast your gains, and render your labours abortive. “For if ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart, &c. (b).” Inspect therefore your conduct both to God and man; inspect the state of your *own* affairs; for it is better to survey your own accounts, than that *commissioners* should do it for you; and give me leave to add this advice, that if you find your condition so low, as not to be more than sufficient to satisfy your creditors, prudence and justice require you to *stop in time*; hereby your reputation will be preserved as an honest man, and you will find even your creditors ready to assist your future attempts.

7th, *Prudence* is to be exercised in governing *those passions* to which our callings most expose us. The passions of the mind are natural to us, and inseparable from us; but the government of them, and subduing their excesses, is the business of *wisdom* and *virtue*. To be a servant to them is a misery below a slave: This bondage the
Tradef-

(b) Mal. ii. 1. Hag. i. 4—10. 2 Cor. ix. 6. Ezek. xxii. 13.

Tradesman is in danger of from various causes. Sometimes *discontent* is ready to seize him, because the wind does not favour his merchandize, or the weather his manufacture.—He is subject to *envy*, from the superior prosperity and success of others, whom he observes to have more custom or credit than himself.—The passion of fear, which was implanted in our natures to prevent evils, and not to increase them, is apt to fluctuate his mind, and sink his spirits; and it is the triumph of *prudence* to extinguish the excesses of it. When we have done our duty, and acted according to the best of our judgments, we should no longer torment ourselves about the event of things, but leave ourselves and all our concerns to the wise and good providence of God.—But foolish *hopes* are often more fatal to the present and eternal concerns of men, than groundless fears; these, though uncomfortable, quicken the spirits to vigour and activity, to prevent the evils apprehended; the others leave us in a fatal security and presumption. How many Tradesmen are ruined by their *vain hopes*! Some enriching scheme, like the *ignis fatuus*, glitters at a distance, and leads them through manifold difficulties in the pursuit, but when it is approached, vanishes into air; other have great expectations from the death of rich friends, or some precarious contingency, in the imagination of which they neglect their proper business, live above their present estates, and like the dog in the fable, quit their present possessions to catch at shadows: Yea, many times such is the infatuation, though they feel themselves sinking, they buoy up their spirits with these *foolish hopes*, until they can neither avoid their fall, nor recover from it. Another passion too common

to the Tradesman is rash *anger*; to this he is more or less exposed according to his natural temper, and employment; and *wisdom* and *prudence* must be exercised to suppress it. A wise man will consider before he gives vent to his anger, whether there is a sufficient cause for it, or it is likely to be attended with good effects; he will make allowances for the circumstances of the action, and the capacity of the agent; and defer the expressions of resentment until the mind is calm and sedate; that his judgment may be just and merciful, and his anger not mixed with *sin*. Though customers may be provoking; servants and workmen, idle and unfaithful; relatives clamorous and peevish; yet religious *wisdom* and *prudence* will so far influence the Tradesman that is possessed of it, that they shall not greatly disturb the peace of his mind, nor disorder the management of his affairs; or render him rude and insolent to his customers: For this is a certain maxim, that the more we are governed by *wisdom*, the less we shall be inflamed by *passion*.

8th, This *discretion* is to be employed in a *prudent consideration of the contingencies of our Calling*. These are exceeding various, and fall under the observation of every Tradesmen in his way. The *prudent* man in these cases considers, what may fall out in this or that country; in this or the other commodity; upon the return of such and such ships, and the like; with the several degrees of probability; and then orders his affairs accordingly. If there was in every trade a certain and constant method, and chain of events, a small degree of sagacity would serve; but with many callings it is otherwise, which makes it necessary for us to use our *reason, observation, and experience* to direct

direct us when to extend or contract our sails, and what course to steer; always remembering to regulate our conduct by the rules of justice and charity to others; and not to exercise our penetration and judgment to prejudice and ensnare the less knowing and considerate.—On the other hand, what is out of our power should be out of our care; we should consider that present *duty* is ours, but future *events* are God's. Whatever disappointments we meet with in our callings, let us patiently and cheerfully submit to his wisdom and government, and still continue to trust in his goodness, to be constant in our duty, and diligent in our employments, hoping that our losses will soon be made up to us, either by the peace and enjoyment of our own minds, or by the blessings of divine providence, or both.

9th, This *prudence* is especially to be exercised in avoiding those methods by which others have been ruined. Every sinking Tradesman is a lesson of instruction to us, and it is far better to learn wisdom from the fatal experience of *others*, than our *own*. Let us cast our eyes abroad, and discern the rocks which they have dashed upon, and the quicksands in which they have been swallowed up, and let our prudence be employed in shunning them. To instance in a few:

Company-keeping. I am speaking of it now, not in a religious, but prudential view; in this light, how often has excess herein been the Tradesman's ruin! Business neglected, is business lost; and the Tradesman that can satisfy himself to be absent from his employ, has no right to expect success in it. Much conversation abroad must necessarily take up much *time*, and is usually attended with great *expence*. The *loss* of the first is often more fatal than

than that of the last; as money may be recovered, but time cannot. In the hours of absence, business presents, a valuable customer comes to *buy*, who not finding the master goes elsewhere: An unexpected bargain offers to be *sold*, an advantage which may never return again.—*Servants* are hereby left to themselves, who if they are unfaithful and negligent, embezzle the cash, disoblige the customers, destroy and spoil the manufactures, and do an inexpressible wrong. It may at first view appear strange, but 'tis certainly true, that the Injury is as great if they are diligent, obliging and faithful. The servant who used to *act as master* in the shop, and render himself acceptable to the customers in his master's absence; when his time is expired, or he sets up for himself, will necessarily draw the customers with him. The man that was contented with the shadow of *authority* in his shop, will find only the shadow of *business* left there, when his ingenious and ruling servant is separated from him. Let your attendance in business be constant, your commodities good, the prices reasonable, and your deportment civil; and I may venture to answer for it that you will find more success in this way, under the blessing of providence, than by a wandering pursuit of business *abroad*, to the loss of time, expence of money, the neglect of servants and family; and, which is a consequence more to be dreaded than all the rest, and too frequent to be passed by without regard, the loss of the soul, by the contagion of corrupt principles and evil practices. “They that
“are least sensible of their danger in this respect,
“are most likely to feel its fatal effects.”

Suretyship. Though this may be lawful, and in some cases necessary, it requires the utmost care

care and caution. Nothing can justify our entering into obligations of this nature, unless we are able to make them good *without injury* to ourselves and families, or perturbation of mind, and can pay them with the same freedom as we do *other debts*; for certainly the whole obligation lies upon the *surety*, both in law and conscience, in case the principal proves insolvent; and who can be content to run these risks? If it be objected, that there is *no trading* without doing this act of friendship for one another; I answer; although men cannot, in all instances, trade so high without it, the desire of which may proceed from pride and covetousness, and end in ruin; yet trade may be carried on in a way more safe, and not less comfortable. If the person is a man of prudence and integrity, the creditor may rely upon his single bond, without entangling another with him; and if he is not so, I am sure he is not fit for your trust. If a refusal to enter into obligations of this sort is charged upon you, as the want of friendship or gratitude; study to oblige them some other way, and endeavour to convince them that it is not a defect of honour or friendship which occasions your denial; for alas, this person who now solicits you, may be *deeper in debt* than you are aware of: Or he may be *bound for others* for more than he is worth; or he may be *less careful* and *just* than you imagine: Or at least he is *mortal*, and may leave his estate and you so much entangled at his death, as may be exceeding injurious, if not totally destructive to you. These are not idle suppositions; but cases that occur every day. Therefore, “my son, be not
“thou one of them that strike hands, or of them
“that are sureties for debts. *But if thou art en-*
“*gaged,*

“gaged, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou
 “halt given thy hand to a stranger; thou art
 “snared with the words of thy mouth.—Give
 “not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine
 “eyelids, until thou hast delivered thyself, &c.
 “(c) *.”

Gaming, is another ruinous practice which
 prudence will preserve you from. Much time is
 spent by many in this idle course; and I doubt a
 pack of *cards*, or a game at *tables*, have often oc-
 casioned the exercises of religion (private and fa-
 mily) to be neglected. But that which I have prin-
 cipally in view is *hazardous* games, of which men
 make not a diversion but a trade, and venture more
 upon the contingency of success, than either reason
 or conscience can justify. Make it your rule, to
 play for no more in any recreation than you may
lawfully expend upon your delight: For whatsoever
 is more than this cometh of evil. Though many
 other vices may *certainly* ruin you, yet these two
 follies of *gaming* and *suretiship* may very *suddenly* do
 it: Many have by these in a few hours undone
 themselves and their families beyond all recovery.
 Let no temptation, therefore, of a speedy gain,
 engage you in a course so opposite to the laws of
 God, and the friendship and love that is due to
 man, and so ruinous and destructive to those that
 enter into it; but fix your unalterable resolutions
 against

* I do not by this intend to suggest, that there are
 no cases in which suretiship for others may be prudently
 entered into, but my design is to caution the Trades-
 man against those rash, unthinking engagements which
 have been attended with such evil consequences to
 many, and often proved their utter ruin.

(c) Prov. vi. 1—5. Chap. xxii. 26. Chap. xi. 15

against it. "Enter not into *this* path of the wicked, and go not in *this* way of evil men: "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away (d)." And never reckon your wealth your own, until you have *restored* whatsoever you have thus injuriously or dishonestly gained.

Prudence will teach you to avoid an *excessive curiosity*; or a *busy intermeddling* with the concerns of others. Every Tradesman has business enough at home to employ his time and faculties; either in works of piety to GOD, charity to the distressed, civility to friends and relatives, or the necessary employments of his calling; but there is no wisdom in intermeddling with the concerns of others, without a just cause, and a due call. Much time is lost, and little good is obtained, by this *trifling disposition*.—Above all, be conscientiously cautious of busying yourself with the *affairs of State*. Many indulge themselves in *great impertinency* in this respect; that affect to have a profound knowledge of politics; to be acquainted with private negotiations, and the secret springs of action; to which are often added rash *censures* of what they do not understand. They can find some fault in every measure of their governors; can tell to whose ignorance or unfaithfulness every disappointment was owing; or to gratify whose pride or revenge this or that step was taken, or law made. By this means they not only discover great folly, but divert others from their proper business, and set them against the most prudent or even necessary measures; and rebellion itself is fomented by indulging this idle humour. Let it be your endeavour to fill up the station in which you are placed with proper duty, and to promote the public

be good by all prudent and laudable **means**; but let no pretence how pious soever, nor any prospect how specious soever, nor any pressure how great soever, prevail with you to disturb the public peace, to dishonor your rulers, or embark in any design unjustifiable by the laws you are to be governed by. Let God alone to rule the *world*; let the lawful magistrate alone to rule his *subjects*; and let it be your business chearfully to obey, or quietly to suffer. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: But let none of you suffer as an *evil-doer*, or as a *busy-body* in other mens matters (c)."

10th, *Prudence* will direct you *so to dispose the common business of life, as not to obstruct the duties of religion*: But that they may harmonize and assist each other. It is true, the nature of some employments, and the necessity of some Tradesmen, allow them *less time* for the worship of God, and the exercises of devotion, than others: But the pious Tradesman, whatever his business or necessity may be, will *redeem some time* for the noble and necessary employments of religion; and will not so far consider his relation to the *present state*, as to forget the eternal concerns of another world. His devotion disposes him for his business, and his business makes his devotion welcome. The less time he can spare in the week, the more careful he is to improve the christian sabbath, when it returns. Thus he draws down the blessing of heaven upon all the labours of life, and gains that wisdom and virtue which enables him to fulfil the duties and bear the burdens of it. But imprudence, as well as irreligion, often renders the

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exerc-

(c) 1 Pet. iv. 14, 15.

exercises of devotion distasteful; the unfitness of the seasons of it, or the undue choice of other circumstances, occasions confusion in the discharge of it; which if it were prudently and sincerely performed, would appear the most delightful and beneficial employment of time.

III. To conclude; From what has been said, we learn of what importance *prudence* is to a Tradesman. It may be of more service to him than all his *stock* or all his *friends*: It will make him *amiable* and *useful* to others, and *happy* in himself. It should therefore be our concern to acquire as much of this excellent quality as may be. It is true, *sagacity* is a natural gift, and all men do not seem to be equally endowed with it; but it may be *improved*, as any other faculty of the mind may. Reasoning on the probable consequences of things, with a careful observation of events as they arise, may be of great use; but above all it is necessary we should get the command of our passions; that they may not bias our judgment, nor hurry us on to action before we have deliberated at all, or in proportion to the importance and difficulty of the matter. For generally, imprudent steps are taken, not for want of *capacity* to judge of their nature or consequences; but through *passion* and *haste* men do what they themselves could see to be imprudent, if they would allow themselves time to think coolly and maturely upon it.

Consider *persons* and *things*; whereby your wisdom will greatly improve: Every thriving or decaying Tradesman will be a lesson of instruction to you. *Solomon* learned wisdom this way; "he looked upon the field of the slothful, he considered

“dered it, and received instruction;” and do you imitate him therein.

Consult wise men. The long observations of others may soon be yours, if you are willing to learn: Do not think that the methods and rules of wisdom and prudence are to be grasped by your own skill; but rather choose to be learning among the wise, than priding yourself among the foolish: For *he that hearkeneth unto counsel, as well as he that is able to give it, is wise.*

Study the sacred scriptures. These are the words of the only-wise God. There you will find precepts of wisdom suited to every state and condition of life; particularly in that excellent collection of *Proverbs*, which was dictated by the Spirit of God on purpose to convey to the “young man knowledge and discretion (*f*).” A book therefore, which should often be consulted by every religious Tradesman; and would certainly have been preferred, even by the polite world, to the writings of *Socrates*, *Seneca*, or *Cicero*, had it not come to us under the disadvantageous character of *divine inspiration*.

Pray that the Father of lights would instruct you: For “he giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh understanding, &c.” *Prov.* ii. 6. “He gives it to all men liberally, and upbraidech not.” And he has said, “If any man lack wisdom let him ask it of God.” He knows all the connections of things, he can influence your mind, and direct your thoughts; can save you from fatal errors in *civil* as well as *religious* life, and keep off temptations of one kind and another. God can give more wisdom than man can acquire

of himself, and those who most seriously and constantly depend upon him, are certainly the persons that are most likely to be possessed of that wisdom which God himself will approve.

What I am recommending is an honest and laudable habit of *prudence*, not that which degenerates into *Subtilty* and *Craft*. Let none under the pretence of wisdom allow themselves to *over-reach* and *deceive* others, or make a prey of their easy and well-meaning neighbours, to compass their own covetous or ambitious ends. This is wisdom *from beneath*; and as it comes from hell, to it leads to it: For “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (g); and the Apostle adds, “be not deceived:” a caution that plainly intimates, it is more than possible the prospect of gain may blind the minds of men, and make them insensible of their guilt and danger. Whatever apprehensions these persons may have of their sagacity and prudence, the world cannot produce a *greater fool*, than he that will affront God, injure his neighbour, and destroy his own soul, for the sake of a *little momentary gain*.

“A good man sheweth favour and lendeth :
“he will guide his affairs with *discretion*, Psal.
“cxii. 5.

“My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow
“down thine ear to understanding.—That thou
“mayst regard *discretion*, and that thy lips may
“keep *knowledge*, Prov. v. 1, 2.

“I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out
“knowledge of witty inventions.—I lead in the
“way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths
“of

“ of judgment.—That I may cause those that love
“ me to inherit substance, *Prov. viii. 12—20.*

“ Wise men lay up *knowledge* : But a rod is
“ for the back of him that is void of *understanding*,
“ *Prov. x. 13, 14.*

“ He that troubleth his own house shall inherit
“ the wind : And the *fool* shall be servant to the
“ wife of heart, *Prov. xi. 29.*

“ Every prudent man dealeth with *knowledge* :
“ But a fool layeth open his folly, *Prov. xiii. 16.*

“ Every *wise* woman buildeth her house ; but
“ the *foolish* plucketh it down with their hands.—

“ The wisdom of the prudent is to *understand* his
“ way.—The simple believeth every word : But
“ the *prudent* man looketh well to his going,
“ *Prov. xiv. 1, 8, 15.*

“ There is a treasure to be desired, and oil in
“ the dwelling of the *wise* : But a *foolish* man
“ spendeth it up, *Prov. xxi. 20.*

“ Through *wisdom* is an house builded, and
“ by *understanding* it is established.—And by
“ *knowledge* shall the chambers be filled with all
“ precious and pleasant riches, *Prov. xxiv. 3, 4.*

“ Be ye *wise* as serpents, and *harmless* as doves,
“ *Mat. x. 16.*

C H A P. IV.

Of Diligence.

- I. *The nature and views of diligence.—The extent of it considered, and recommended. In the serious employment of our powers*

and faculties;—and the substance of our time, in our callings.—In laying hold of opportunities.—In a becoming care of those things which are accounted small.—In rejecting those avocations which would divert us from our proper business. II. *Excitations to diligence.*—The regard due to divine providence.—The necessity of spiritual diligence urged.—Scriptures relative to this chapter.

I. **D**ILIGENCE, as it relates to trade, is an habitual employment of our bodily and mental powers about our proper callings, in a just and happy medium between idleness, and supinensis, and trifling curiosity on the one hand: and slavish crouching and immoderate care on the other. It differs not in the religious Tradesman from the same virtue in other men, but as it flows from a better principle, and is directed to an higher end. The vicious and profane, as they know not God, so they live not to him; all their labours and views center in themselves, and the indulgence of their appetites and desires is the principal guide and end of all their actions. But the good man considers himself, whatever may be his station in life, as the servant of divine providence; and makes the word of God the rule, and the honour of God the end of his common employments: He is diligent therein from a sense of duty, as well as from the prospect of gain. This virtue is chiefly exercised in the following particulars.

1st, In the serious employment of the powers of mind and body, in our callings. Whatever labours

city of mind, depth of judgment, or quickness of invention you are endowed with, should be employed. There is, indeed, less use for these in some callings than in others; but there is room for the exercise of them in all, and they are much better *used* in the meanest callings, than *perverted* to the dishonour of God, or the injury of others.—Again, have you a firm constitution, a vigorous nerve, an able arm, or a curious hand; *serve God with these in your callings*; for to this end were you intrusted with them. God has appointed the honest labours of life to provide support for the body, and prevent the distempers of the mind; sober *industry* spends those exuberant spirits, which otherwise are apt to break forth in unlawful flames; and the more laborious the less lascivious: Indeed, we are not required so to exhaust our strength in the business of the day, as to leave ourselves spiritless in the close of it; but in moderation we should not be backward to exert ourselves in our employments, seeing God *accepts of our labour*; and will by food and rest recruit our strength and spirits again.

2d, *In employing the substance of our time in our callings.* As the servant's time is his master's, so the master's time is God's, and not his own; which the religious Tradesman will carefully improve, and wisely divide between the concerns of this life and the next. Hours have wings, and every moment flies up to the Author of time, and carries notice of our usage of it. The common callings of life necessarily require the *constant* employment of time, and are not to be attended to as business *by the by*: The industrious Tradesman will, if health permit, be stirring early, and continue with chearful diligence in his business: His

family, and shop, his friends, or the public, teaching or learning, will find him full employment for his time; and he will need no miserable helps to destroy that which flies with so swift a speed. "Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour, until the evening (b)."

3d, *In laying hold of opportunities*; for diligence includes watchfulness. Great things may sometimes be done in a little time; and opportunities, if embraced, will reward our care and diligence; if they are let slip, may never present themselves again: for "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose." These are like wind and tide, with which men sail with ease and expedition, and these the diligent Tradesman will be careful to observe and improve. Care is as necessary to success as labour; let men be ever so industrious and painful, unless they are considerate and watchful, their success is like to be but small.

4th, *In a becoming attention to little things*. Many small matters arise in time to something considerable: A small customer attended to and pleased, shews the way to a greater: But the disdainful to get or save things of small value, is often punished by divine providence, in reducing such pride and carelessness to indigence and want. It is the remark of a very wise man, "he that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little (i)." The gifts of the Creator's bounty, abused by one man's folly and vanity, are often transferred to another, who will make a better use of them. God forbid that I should encourage a covetous, sordid disposition; what I recommend,

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(b) Psal. civ. 23.

(i) Ecclus. xix. 1.

is a diligent care to make the best use of things, and to regard those *smaller* matters on which *greater* depend, or which by some few *repetitions* may amount to something considerable. A constant and careful respect to this has raised many persons to a considerable estate, and enabled others even with a little, to do much more good than the careless person can do with a large income. Our divine Master has herein proposed his own conduct for our imitation, who when he had fed *five thousand* people with only *five loaves* and *two* fishes, by which he had shewn how easily he could create food, yet ordered the *fragments* to be gathered up, that “nothing might be lost (k).”

5th, *In rejecting those avocations which would divert you from your business.* The Tradesman's shop or warehouse should be the place of his delight; from whence he should not wander without some reasonable motive; for here his business and advantage lies. It must be something considerable which will justify a Tradesman's reposing himself at his *country-house*, or *elsewhere*, while his affairs and family at home are left at random. Many Families have this way been undone; and many servants ruined, by being left *masters of their own wills* before they have had prudence to guide themselves. Consider, Sirs, how is the trust performed to the parents of your apprentices, who confiding in your personal worth and care, placed their children with you? Nay, how is the trust performed to almighty God, who by his providence hath given you the *charge* over them? And as you are the only persons that can inspect and regulate their behaviour, while they continue in your service; it

(k) John vi. 12.

is from *you* that he will require an account concerning them. If you are grown too great for your trades, or they too hard for you, it is better to resign them to more diligent hands, than to carry them on in a way thus destructive to others, and offensive to God.

This *diligence* will guard you against consuming your time and substance at *houses of publick entertainment*. It is not easy to say how far such converse may be permitted; but it is easy to perceive that many Tradesmen exceed those bounds which diligence and sobriety, not to say religion, will allow. How many must be sought at the *Tavern*, &c. who should be found in their shops, and are expending that money at *places of entertainment*, of which, duty to their family, and justice to others, call for a different account. And indeed, this diligence will abridge all *unnecessary time wasting* pleasures and recreations. Such as are moderate and seasonable, are no doubt very allowable; but when they *captivate* the mind, *encroach* upon business, or *consume* the substance, it is high time to reject, or at least to restrain them. Diversions should be tasted by us, as the dogs of *Egypt* are said to do the water of *Nilus*, with great caution, lest the crocodiles devour them.

Needless and fruitless visits will be restrained by this diligence. A due performance of these is necessary to friendship and business; but *idle, gossiping visits*, which are employed in ransacking the affairs or faults of others; judging or condemning those who by their absence are incapable of defending themselves; or in censuring the methods of public administration, the reasons and springs of which are entirely unknown to persons in common life; these the diligent Tradesman avoids.

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His visits will be commonly *short, serious, and cheerful*; whereby he may leave a relish of goodness behind him, and a desire in his friends to see him again.

Lastly, This diligence will restrain all *unseasonable devotion*. Far be it from me to discourage the exercises of religious worship; our climate is generally, in this respect, cold enough. But there is an indlicreet zeal in some, which causes them to *neglect* the necessary duties of relative and social life; their families languish for want of their care, and their business for want of their presence; their work is left undone at home, and their debts unpaid abroad, while they are running from *sermon to sermon*, &c. This can by no means be justified: Not that an industrious Tradesman may not redeem some time from his common calling, for public or private devotion; for the improvement and delight of his mind, as well as the refreshment of the body; but then he will take care that it is consistent, 1. With the *abilities of his mind*; for if the bucket be broken, it will hold no water.—2. With *his lawful calling*; for therein God is truly served.—3. And with time, to *reflect upon*, and *practise* what he hears; for the great end of devotion is to “teach us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,” and at last arrive with safety and joy to a better state.

II. Let the religious Tradesman be *excited* to the practice of *industry*. It conduces much (under the favour of providence) to our temporal *prosperity*; the diligent are usually blessed with plenty; and no doubt affluence is a blessing, notwithstanding the frequent perversion of it, or else it had never been made the subject of so many divine promises: If riches,
and

and honour are good for you, this is the way to attain them : for as there is no calling to great but *sloth* will *impoverish*, so there are few so mean but diligence will improve. But whatever our success is, I am sure it is most conducive to our *comfort* : I dare appeal to every one's experience, whether they find not more inward peace and satisfaction when the day has been diligently employed in their proper callings ; than when it has been trifled away in sloth and folly : As it greatens our relishes of the rest and refreshments of life ; for the food as well as " the sleep of the labouring man is sweet."—But then let us be very cautious that this diligence does not degenerate into *covetousness*, and we thereby lose the reward, as we extinguish the virtue of it ; and contract a curse instead of gaining a blessing by it.

III. Let the blessed God be owned and honoured, by *humble prayer*, for a blessing on your diligence ; and *affectionate praise* and *gratitude* for success therein : " He it is that giveth you power " to get wealth (l)." And without his blessing " it is in vain for you to rise up early, and sit up " late, and to eat the bread of carefulness (m)." He governs and influences the minds of others, and directs all those circumstances which must *preserve* what his bounty bestows, or else a thousand accidents will soon deprive you thereof.

IV. Let us close this chapter with an obvious reflection. Is *diligence* so much a duty in the common business of *this life* ; how much more is it so in the great concerns of *religion* and an *eternal world* ? If earthly riches do not drop into the mouths

(l) Deut. viii. 18.

(m) Psal. cxxvii. 2.

mouths of men while sleeping, nor are to be obtained without labour and care ; much less are the *habits* of virtue and goodness, and the *rewards* of glory and happiness. God will not carry us to heaven like stones, without any sense or motion of our own ; but requires us to shew our esteem of his eternal grace and favour, by *running, fighting, wrestling, and striving* * for it, before he bestows it upon us. As sloth is the evident cause of mens present poverty, so it is of their future misery ; they will not be at the *pains* to be saved, though all the labour in religion is accompanied with real pleasure and sweetness. Shake off Sirs, this base distemper of the soul, and let not your diligence for *trifles* condemn your coldness and dulness in the pursuit of *heavenly and true riches*. Let the foregoing directions be attended to for the prosperity of your souls, as well as that of your callings ; 1. *Seriously employ all the powers of nature*, in the service and love of the ever blessed GOD.—2. *Let time be diligently improved* ; let not that be mispent, or run waste, while work of so great importance lies before you.—3. *Lay hold of every opportunity* for doing or receiving good.—4. *Take a becoming care* of those things that are accounted *small*, though nothing that relates to GOD, and another world, is really so ; let no small duty be omitted, and no small sin indulged ; for a man may as surely bleed to death by the wound of a lancet, as by that of a sword.—5. *And reject those avocations* which would *divert you from* the great business of religion : let not the world, the flesh, or the devil, draw away your minds from the love and duty which you owe to GOD, and the

concern

* These are scripture metaphors.

concern that is necessary for the salvation of the soul. Only take heed that you do not put your spiritual *diligence* in the room of the *grace* and *righteousness* of the Lord Jesus Christ ; for so all your labour in religion will be utterly lost and fruitless ; since it is his *perfect merits* (rested in by faith) and not your *good works*, that will justify you before God ; and it is his *grace* and *strength*, and not your *vigilance* and *care*, that must enable you to fulfil the duties of the christian life.

“ Pharaoh said unto Joseph.—If thou knowest
 “ any man of *activity* amongst thy brethren, then
 “ make them rulers over my cattle, *Gen.* xlvii. 5, 6.

“ The man Jeroboam was a mighty man of
 “ valour ; and Solomon seeing the young man
 “ that he was *industrious*, he made him ruler
 “ over all the charge of the house of Joseph,
 “ *1 Kings* xi. 28.

“ He becometh poor that dealeth with a *slack*
 “ hand ; but the hand of the *diligent* maketh
 “ rich.—He that gathereth in summer, is a wise
 “ son : But he that *sleepeth* in harvest, is a son
 “ that causeth shame, *Prov.* x. 4, 5.

“ He that *tilleth his land* shall be satisfied with
 “ bread ; but he that *followeth vain persons* is void
 “ of understanding.—The hand of the *diligent*
 “ shall bear rule ; but the *slothful* shall be under
 “ tribute.—The substance of the *diligent* man is
 “ precious, *Prov.* xii. 11, 24, 27.

“ He that is *slothful* in his work is brother to
 “ him that is a great waster, *Prov.* xviii. 9.

“ The sluggard will not plow by reason of the
 “ cold ; therefore shall he beg in harvest and have
 “ nothing.—Love not *sleep*, lest thou come to

“ po-

" poverty: Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be
 " satisfied with bread, *Prov. xx. 4, 13.*

" He that loveth *pleasure* shall be a poor man:

" He that loveth wine and oil, shall not be rich,

" *Prov. xxi. 17.*

" Seest thou a man *diligent* in his business? he

" shall stand before kings, he shall not stand be-

" fore mean men, *Prov. xxii. 29.*

" I went by the field of the *sluggish*, and by

" the vineyard of the man void of understand-

" ing.—Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little

" folding of the hands to sleep.—So shall thy po-

" verty come as one that travelleth; and thy

" want as an armed man, *Prov. xxiv. 30—34.*

" Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it

" with *thy might*; for there is no work, nor de-

" vice, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave

" whither thou goest, *Eccles. ix. 10.*

C H A P. V.

Of Justice.

§ I. *The nature of justice.*—II. *Obligations to it.*—III. *Instances of it, as conscionable bargains.*—*The ready payment of just debts.*—*Using exact weights and measures.*—*The right working of manufactures.*—*The discharge of all lawful impositions, taxes, or customs.*—*Due respect to the laws and orders of Societies.*—*An equitable regard to fellow tradesmen.*—*A paternal care of apprentices.*

prentices.—Suitable provision for wife and children.—Mercy to the poor.—A punctual regard to all lawful contracts.—The restitution of unlawful gains.—IV. Exhortations to the practice of justice.—Scriptures suited thereto.

I. **T**HE nature of justice, as it respects mens dealing with each other, is contained in that divine rule of our blessed Lord's; "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them;" that is, do ye in all cases to others, whatsoever is fit for you to expect from them in like circumstances. It is an habit of mind that disposes us to *render to all their dues*; and as was said of diligence, it differs not in the real christian from the same virtue in others, but as faith in the Lord Jesus, reverence to God, and a love to goodness, are the springs of it. I say it is *a habit of the mind*: For it relates not merely to a particular action, but the *general* series and tenor of our lives. A man may be pale through fear, or red with blushing, yet we do not from hence call him a *pale* or a *ruddy* man; because these are nor his complexion, they are merely incidental and transient. So he alone deserves the honourable name of *just*, whose conduct is *uniformly* upright, and who has such a love to justice, as to maintain its practice, whether it meets with present applause or not, or even though it should sometimes thwart his apparent interest, *Psal. xv. 4.*

II. Our obligations to this great duty are manifold: 1. The light of *nature* and *reason* of things, enforce it; men are not like the fishes of the sea,
made

made to prey upon and devour one another; but as every one requires to be *justly* dealt with himself, so reason obliges him to treat others in the *same* manner: This is a principle so evident to the consciences of men, that it is impossible to obliterate it, however their vicious inclinations prevail with them to act contrary to it. The Roman Emperor *Severus*, so much admired that golden rule of our Saviour's, "*Quid tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris*;" What you would not have done "to you, do not to others;" that he made it his *motto*, and caused it to be written on his doors and buildings, and enrolled the divine Author of it among his Gods; and would to God it was more legibly inscribed, not so much upon the *walls*, as in the *hearts and lives* of those who call themselves christians.

2. The moral law of God obliges us to the practice of *justice*: This is the sum of the duties required in the second table; which indeed is only a new edition of the law of nature. "Thou shalt not covet," excludes the principles, and "Thou shalt not steal," prohibits the practice of whatsoever is unjust or dishonourable in our conduct to others; and these rules are enforced by numerous and repeated injunctions: "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye *judgment*, and do *justice*, and speak every man truth with his neighbour," (a)." "Thou shalt not *defraud* thy neighbour: But that which is altogether *just* shalt thou follow (b)." He has strengthened these precepts with *threatnings* of severe punishment in case of disobedience; many instances of the performance

(a) Isa. lvi. 1. Zech. viii. 16. (b) Lev. xix. 13. Deut. xvi. 20.

formance of which are visible in the world, but many more are reserved to the great and solemn day of retribution.—The *gospel* of Christ binds the consciences of all who expect to receive a share in the blessings of it, to the exact performance of this duty; it is the very design of it “to teach” men to live soberly, and *righteously*, as well as “godly, in this present world (c).” It deprives the *unjust* of any present claim to the benefits of it; for “if they are *not faithful* in the unrighteous “mammon, who will commit to their trust the “true riches (d)?” And utterly excludes them from the hopes of the future glories and rewards of it; “know ye not that the *unrighteous* shall not “inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; “neither thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners “shall inherit the kingdom of God (e).” So that he who allows himself to violate the laws of *justice*, mains christianity; and, whatever his profession of religion may be, it is false and insincere for he can never be *true to God*, who is *unjust to man*, nor can he reasonably hope to be *accepted* of him.

And not only duty and conscience, but *present interest* obliges him to the exercise of *probity* and *justice*: It is the surest and safest way to prosperity, and has a natural tendency to promote it: The universal practice of it will necessarily establish a *good character*, upon which much of the Tradesman’s success depends; every one loves to deal with an *honest man*; and the credit and reputation that attends it procures many advantages to the possessor of it.—Though the indiscretion of some
honest

(c) Tit. ii. 12. (d) Luke xvi. 10—12. (e) 1 Cor. v. 9, 10.

honest and just men may keep them poor ; and divine providence may afflict others to convince an unbelieving world of a judgment to come ; yet the good God evidently *blesſes* many with temporal prosperity to ſhew his love to righteouſneſs, and the goodneſs of his providence in the preſent ſtate. “ The faithful man ſhall abound with “ bleſſings ; *while* he that haſteth to be rich by “ *injuſtice and deceit* ſhall be puniſhed (f).” Shame and miſery are the natural fruits of injuſtice and fraud ; and when men have increaſed their wealth, and feathered their neſts with the ſpoils of others, the divine vengeance, like a *fire not blown*, often *conſumes them* ; and it does not reſt here, “ for it “ goes ill with them that are left in their taber- “ nacles (g).” So odious is this ſin to God, that even the poſterity of the unjuſt and oppreſſive ſhall feel the effects of his indignation againſt it ; and we may often obſerve that ill-gotten wealth moulders away we know not how in the hands of thoſe for whom it was *unjuſtly* laid up.

III. Having thus briefly conſidered the *nature* of juſtice, and our *obligations* to the practice of it, we proceed to ſpecify the *inſtances* in which the Tradeſman is to exerciſe it.

1^{ſt}, *Juſtice* obliges the Tradeſman to *make conſcientious bargains* ; that he neither *ſells* too dear, nor *buys* too cheap ; but does by others as he would be dealt by himſelf.

1. It requires us to exact only a *reaſonable proportion of gain* from what we ſell. The meature of allowable gain for all Tradeſmen cannot be determined by any particular rule : It cannot be always meaſured by what the commodity *can*, ſince

(f) Prov. xxviii. 23.

(g) Job xx. 26.

since surprize or ignorance may occasion a dear purchase? and why should others pay for my folly? Or it might by some special occurrence be obtained very cheap; and no reason will oblige me to give away that advantage.—The rates at which *some others sell*, cannot always be the proper measure of gain; for they may be necessitated to sell at under-rates and why should other men's indigence prejudice me? Or they may undersell others to gain customers, taking too little for one thing, and over-reaching them in others; and why should that mean artifice regulate those that are above it? Or else they may be unreasonable and extravagant in their prices, and why must I be governed by their covetousness?—What a commodity hath *formerly* sold for, can be no just rule; for every one knows that prices ebb and flow, and what was worth a guinea last year, may not be worth half so much this. Nor is, what will *maintain* the Tradesman and his family, a sure guide; for two shillings in the pound may be profit sufficient for those whose returns are considerable, or their expences small; whereas twice as much may not suffice for the supply of a numerous, or sickly family.—But then the *most we can get*, is very far from being a just measure for our gains, for it is possible to exact twice the value of a commodity from an unskilful or unwary customer, which is downright injustice and fraud.—Nor, lastly, can the *intrinsic worth*, be a constant rule for valuation; since in divers things that cannot be known, and in many others *fancy* is the only guide: So that the surest rule that can be given is the *market price*, which as it is the most general, so it is usually the least liable to exception; and less partial than the conduct of particular men. A due allow-

allowance is fit to be made for a person's *time* and *labour*, *hazard* and *skill*; and *long credit* makes it reasonable for the Tradesman to advance the price of his goods, as he is thereby deprived of the *improvement* of his money, and runs some hazard of losing it; but in estimating the disadvantage on these heads, and making allowance for them, he is always to conduct himself by the rules of justice and honour; and desire no more gain from others when he sells, than he allows reasonable for others to gain by him, when he is the purchaser; remembering that "light gains make an heavy purse, but large gains often make an heavy conscience."

2. Justice forbids the *taking advantage of another's necessity* in your bargains. Let not the cries of the *poor* ascend to God against you, for sinking the prices of their labour or goods so low that it is impossible they should live upon the profits of them; nor let the *necessity* they are known to be under of receiving ready money for what they *sell* for the subsistence of themselves and families, ever tempt you to withhold from them the allowance of *reasonable gain*. "I have known a fordid Tradesman buy manufactured metal of a necessitous workman at the same price that unmanufactured was known to cost, and then glory in his bargain;" but how common or gainful soever such practices may be, I am sure it is horrid *injustice* and *oppression*; if there is any providence of God in this world, or any truth in his word, the *divine curse* must needs attend all such iniquitous courses. If ever your covetousness tempt you to such kind of conduct, consider that confounding question which God, the poor man's King, puts unto you; "What mean ye that ye grind the faces
" of

“ of the poor, saith the Lord God of hosts *(b)* ?” and prevent the shame and confusion that must attend your answer to such an enquiry, by a sincere repentance, if you have been guilty herein ; and a more *human* and *christian* method of trade for the time to come. Nor let their *necessities* encourage you to encroach upon them in what they want to *buy*, or in any thing they want to borrow for their necessary use, which is equal injustice and oppression with the former.—Or if your fellow Tradesman should need *some commodity* to supply his customer with, shew your generosity and honour by using him *as you would be done unto* ; and in no case wait for an advantage to prey upon the straits of others, for none would willingly be *so dealt with* themselves : nay, ingenuity and benevolence should incline you rather to deal better by those whose *wants* oblige them to make their application to you, than by others who stand in *no need* of such consideration.

3. Make no advantage of others *unskilfulness* in your bargains. Every one is not endowed with knowledge or sagacity alike ; persons may easily forget, mistake, or overshoot themselves : Nay it is impossible that any should be a competent judge of the value or goodness of *every* commodity they may want to purchase or sell : We must be sensible that this is often our *own* case ; therefore if it is unjust and ungenerous for any to take advantage of *our* ignorance or oversight, it is equally so for us to do the same by *others* ; what is wrong in one case must certainly be so in the other ; and no excuse can justify us. Say not, my knowledge was given me to *improve* those opportunities to my advantage, and let every one look to themselves ;

selves ; but the just and righteous Governor of the world never gave any one superior understanding and skill to be *perverted* to such base and ungenerous purposes ; and you might with the same propriety say that your power and strength was given you to rob every one that is incapable of resisting you ; for if reason or justice hold in the one case, I am sure it will in the other.--Neither say, I only deal by *others*, as others deal by *me* in such cases ; for it is just as reasonable to say, because my house has been set on fire by others, therefore I will burn my neighbour's : The criminal conduct of others can be no plea for your imitation ; and the more general the practice of vice, the more honour and virtue there is in dissenting from it.

“ Let no man *therefore* go beyond (or over-reach)
 “ or defraud his brother in any matter ; for GOD
 “ is the avenger of all such (i).

4. Make no bargains with such as have *no just property* in what they are contracting about. Some care is due in this case in those that *sell*, that they encourage not children, or other weak people to traffic with them ; who cannot reasonably be supposed to be trusted with money.—But it especially concerns those who are tempted to *buy* such goods as they know, or greatly suspect to be *stolen*. It is true, thy *gains* may be large by such bargains, but I am sure thy *guilt* is greater : You assist and encourage them in their wickedness, “ When
 “ thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with
 “ him (k).” He that knowingly *connives at* or *assists* in an evil action, *shares* in the guilt of it : And if you should be so artful as to escape the laws

(i) 1 Thess. iv. 6.

(k) Psal. l. 18.

laws of man, which are strict against these transgressions ; yet the penetrating eye of God always beholds you, who will sooner or later make you sensible of his indignation at your theft and covetousness. Say not, my shop is my market ; for what honest man will buy a *stolen* horse in the market, if he knows or suspects it to be so ? Neither plead, that if you buy them not *others will* ; for the wickedness of others will be no sufficient excuse for your iniquity. It is strange, that men, who reason and act prudently enough in other things, yet when the laws of their Creator interrupt their vicious inclinations, lose both sense and reason too, and will venture the anger of almighty God, offer violence to their consciences, and hazard their reputations, rather than miss of a little sordid gain. Meddle not with such *dishonest* purchases, but chuse even to be *poor with integrity*, rather than to be *rich by unrighteousness*.

5. Use yourselves to an *honest plainness* in your bargains. *Ordinary* and *discernable* faults the buyer is supposed to take notice of, but if your goods have any such *private* or *undiscovered* defects, as would cause him to relinquish his purchase, to lessen his offers for them if he knew them, it is *unjust* to obtrude them upon him. It is not sufficient in this case to say, that you sell them at a price *proportionable*, (though I fear this is not always done) for the defects may so far lessen them in the buyer's esteem, or render them so unsuitable to his intention in the purchase of them, that he would not buy them at *any* rate ; and it is not your formal cant, or fallacious harangues, that will alter the property of a bad commodity. If the buyer is censured for saying, *it is naught, it is naught*, in order to lessen the price, and when he
goeth

goeth his way rejoiceth in the goodness of his purchase ; I am sure the seller is equally guilty, who says, *it is faultless ; it is exceeding good ;* when he knows it to be quite the reverse. Ask your consciences, Sirs, if this conduct can be *justified* before God ; or if it is doing by others as you would be *done unto* ?—If it be replied, we are under a necessity to *buy* damaged and faulty goods along with others, and we must *sell* them. I answer, buy as *few* of them as may be ; and sell them to those who understand what they buy, and if you should lose something by them, rather than impose them upon the ignorant ; the divine providence can easily and largely reward your self-denial.

2d, *Justice requires the ready payment of all just debts* at the appointed time. Prudence will direct us to be cautious what debts we contract, but when they become due, Justice requires that they be *punctually discharged* ; otherwise we keep the possession while another has the right. The matter is not whether the creditor is rich or poor, for all have a right to claim their own ; but it is an aggravating circumstance of guilt, when the *necessitous*, the *widow* and the *fatherless* are injured. If you plead *inability*, this will neither justify, nor excuse you, unless God by his providence hath disabled you, in which case you are obliged to use all possible lawful endeavours to make due satisfaction ; and both reason and justice require the *ful* payment of your debts *whenever you are able*, even though your creditors, considering your indigent state, may accept of what your present abilities will allow ; for right can never be *lost*, in conscience, where there is a future sufficiency ; though it may be fit to be abated in law : but let not those calamities be charged on God's providence,

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which

which are the effects of your own imprudence.— Justice also requires that debts be paid not only fully, but *speedily*, as they become due : If we are not to say to our neighbour, *go, and come again, if we have it by us*, when he cometh to *beg* or to *borrow*, Prov. iii. 28. much less when he asks only for that which is *his own*, you know not what necessity he may have for it, or what dependance he may place upon it, which may involve him in an hundred difficulties upon the disappointment ; *he may be poor and set his heart upon it* ; and it is unmerciful as well as unjust, needlessly to *delay* the payment of it.

But the most inexcusable violation of *justice*, is, a Tradesman's *breaking upon design*, in order to defraud the creditors of their dues, and enrich himself with their spoils. Such iniquity can have no refuge to screen itself from confusion and remorse, but a seared conscience, or direct atheism : *How many heinous sins dost thou wilfully and deliberately commit, for a little momentary gain ! Here are repeated lies, if not perjury ; stealing, notorious hypocrisy and dissimulation ; contempt of God's law and justice, and injury to men. How canst thou hope to escape the righteous judgment of God who art guilty of crimes like these ?*

3d, *Justice* consists in using *exact weights and measures* : Without these, commerce is a perfect cheat : The buyer goes away satisfied, on the supposition that he has the *quantity* bargained for, when it is no such thing ; than which nothing can be more contrary to probity and justice. “ Thou shalt not have in thy bags divers weights, “ a great (*to buy with*) and a small (*to sell with*) “ neither shalt thou have in thy house divers measures. For all that do such things, and all that

“ do

“ do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the
 “ Lord. But thou shalt have a perfect and just
 “ weight, and a perfect and just measure shalt
 “ thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in
 “ the land which the Lord thy God giveth
 “ thee (l). Are there yet the treasures of deceit
 “ in the house of the wicked, and the scant mea-
 “ sure, which is abominable? Shall I count them
 “ pure with the wicked balances, and with the
 “ bag of deceitful weights, saith the Lord (m)?”
 Thus detestable do these instances of *injustice* ap-
 pear to God, which should cause all those to
 shun them, who have any desire to approve them-
 selves as men of conscience and religion — The
buyer as well as the *seller* should be content with
just and *equal* dealings, and not desire to endeavour
 to obtain more than he agrees for, or by any arts
 or deceits whatsoever to *impose upon* or *prejudice* his
 neighbour.

Among other frauds, *false lights* are justly
 reckoned; when Tradesmen so contrive the lights
 of their shops as to represent their commodities
 better than they really are; and when the chap-
 man reviews his purchase at home, he finds it
 quite another thing; now what can be more *unjust*
 than this? It is deceiving thy neighbour, and no
 other than picking his purse of so much as is ex-
 torted from him by this means, above the real
 worth of the commodity.

4th, *Justice* obliges the Tradesman to the *right*
working of all manufactures. Human laws often
 make provision for this; but the cases in which
fraud may be committed are so various, that it is
 impossible to reach them all, and, unless men are

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under

(l) Deut. xv. 15—16.

(m) Mic. vi. 10—12.

under the awe of God and conscience, they will find evasions, and trample the laws under their feet. *Justice* will teach the Tradesman to do such work for *others*, as he would have done *for himself*; and not through sloth, multiplicity of businels, or any covetous view, to render things *less serviceable* than they ought to be. It is true, it is not necessary to bestow *equal* care or labour upon every piece of work, the *stuff*, the price, or the design of it may not require it; but equity requires that every manufacture have the perfection *requisite* to its kind; and forbids the *deceitful* thrusting in of a baser stuff or metal instead of a better, even though it may do the purchaser equal service, or he may never be sensible of the difference; because it is imposing upon his ignorance, and extorting a price from him above the *true value* of the commodity. Say not, the price will not allow that things be made as they ought, for it is the *slightness* of work that is the usual cause of reduction in the price; and if goods were better, the *prices* might be better too, as is evident from repeated facts, that they who do the best work have the greatest gains, as well as the most credit.

5th, *Justice* requires the ready and chearful payment of all *lawful impositions, taxes, or customs*. As the Tradesman enjoys the *benefit and protection* of government; he should not think much to contribute to the *support* of it; and *to render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom*. *Justice* obliges you either punctually to discharge them, or plainly to deny that they are *due*; but how can you question this, when they are settled by law, and this law the act of your own consent, by your representatives; grounded upon the plainest reasons, and designed

to support the office of magistracy, and protect the rights of the subject?—Say not that the profits of them are transmitted to *other* hands, it is the officers who gain by these things, and their revenues are so large, that there is little hurt in *wronging* them; for these were invested with an undoubted right from the proprietor, and so cannot lawfully be defrauded, any more than a tenant of what he taketh in lease from his landlord.—Neither plead that the *end* of taxations are not answered, trade and property are not secured, the seas are not guarded, or the like: For it is hard to prove the matter of fact, and the care of the government ought not to be censured without clear and uncontrollable evidence: The neglect of *subordinate* officers must not be thrown upon the *chief* magistrate, unless it be frequent, notorious, and after due information: And after all, there ever were, and will be some oversights; some unworthy persons employed, who will seek their own and not the public good; whose negligence must be corrected by their superiors, and not pleaded in excuse for the neglect of *duty* by every private person.—Neither is it enough to say that you are ready to *stand to the penalty*, whenever you are detected in withholding custom, or the like; for there is no *common thief* but might make this plea, if there was any strength in it: Penalties are annexed to laws to deter those from evil, whom neither conscience towards God, nor justice to man, will *bold to* their duty; and it would be little to your reputation to come under this character.

And as you should “render to Cæsar the things
“that are Cæsar’s;” so should you “render to
“God the things that are God’s.” If you expect the blessing of Heaven, withhold not from

his *Ministers* whatsoever by law or equity is due unto them ; for “ God hath ordained that they “ which preach the gospel, should live by the “ gospel (n).” As they have relinquished the gainful employments of life for the service of God and the interests of religion & they have a claim to be *supported* in a manner becoming their office, that they may be freed from the anxieties of want, and may be examples as well as promoters of charity to others : and this is not only a point of religion and charity, but *justice* and *equity*.

6th, *Justice* requires the tradesman to *pay due respect to the laws and orders of his society* : To the observation of which, the members thereof are usually obliged by oath. Supposing these laws to be agreeable to the dictates of reason and religion, Justice and conscience obliges your obedience to them, although they may sometimes interfere with your private interest. For instance, Are you called to any office of charge or trouble ? if it is consistent with your concerns, you should readily discharge it ; or if not, cheerfully submit to such fines as are duly imposed.—Or are you *prohibited* to import or export some profitable commodity, whereby the poor at home might want subsistence, or public enemies be strengthened and encouraged ? *Justice* requires your ready compliance with such orders—Or are you engaged to employ *no foreigner* in your service, lest those who have served a regular apprenticeship be discouraged, or left without employment ? Justice and fidelity oblige you to refuse all such assistants ; especially where the end of those institutions are cross’d by so doing. In a word, we ought in all things to consult the *good of society*,

(n) 1 Cor. ix. 14.

society, as well as our own ; and the *future good*, as well as the present ; if we will be faithful and true to our obligations.

7th, *Justice* demands an *equitable regard to your fellow Tradesmen*. Though every man may use all lawful methods to increase and secure his custom ; yet, charity should keep us from hindering those who are *poorer* than ourselves ; and justice forbids the gaining customers or chapmen from others, by any *dishonourable* or *indirect* means : Particularly, let every unjust reflection, and depreciating insinuation on your fellow Tradesman's *character* or *goods*, be abhorred ; and every other mean artifice to increase your business at the expence of your neighbour's : but let this always be your governing principle, *to do unto others as you would be done unto*. — And though masters should be content that their apprentices at setting up should carry away some customers from them, being part of the consideration for their time and money ; yet no ingenuous apprentice will use any *unworthy* means to gain customers to himself ; or do any thing but what is common and approvedly done in that case, either *before* or *after* the expiration of his time ; remembering that when he comes into the same circumstances, he himself will not be contented with such usage.

Again, *ingrossing of commodities*, whereby many are impoverished for the enriching of a few ; whether it be done by societies, or single persons, is directly contrary to the laws of *justice* and *charity* ; which command us *to love our neighbours as ourselves* : And not to seek our own advantage to the prejudice of others. The law of nature gives to every man a right of *comfortable subsistence* by labour and commerce : Those that deprive others of

these advantages by covetous and self-enriching schemes, are *common enemies* to mankind. Men may "boast when they do well for themselves ;" and others may bless the covetous whom God "abhors (o) ;" but the common and tender *Father* of all, cannot but hate these gains of oppression, and punish this method of *hastening to be rich* : And we often see the effects thereof, in the fall and ruin of those who thought to enrich themselves by the gains of unrighteousness.

Neither is it agreeable to *justice or equity*, for the rich Tradesman or Artificer, whose estate perhaps may bear him out, in such a manner to *undersell* his poorer fellow Tradesman, that they wanting his stock and credit cannot preserve their customers, or subsist upon those prices. This conduct is especially criminal where the very design of it is to weaken and impoverish others.

Lastly, That *injustice* is intolerable which is offered to your *partners in trade* : Who repose the same confidence in you, as they do in themselves ; and to whom you are bound by all the strictest ties of *law, conscience and mutual confidence*. For such persons to undermine, or purloin from each other, is a crime that deserves the severest censure ; and cannot be practised by any who have not lost all love to virtue, or fear of shame.

8th, *Justice* obliges the tradesman to a *parental care about his apprentices*. Prudence directs to chuse such as are of sober characters, tolerable tempers, and capacities fit for business ; and not for the sake of a little present money, or to supply an immediate pinch of business, to thrust a thorn into your sides, which may pain you for seven long years : but those whom you see fit to bind
and

and receive into your families, *justice* obliges you to use in the same manner as you would have your *own children treated*, when they come into the same condition.

1. Beware of undue *severity* and *rigour* towards them : This will discourage them in your service, if worse consequences do not attend it. Remember that you were once in the same state, and repeat not upon them what was *then* justly esteemed an hardship by yourself ; remember that *you also have a master in heaven*, who rules by love and just authority, and not by severity and vengeance ; and do you imitate him therein. Let the government of your servants be such as may command love and esteem, as well as respect and obedience, that they may feel it to be as much their *interest* as their *duty* to serve you.—Maintain your authority over them by a life of *virtue* and *religion* : This will produce reverence, and enforce respect much more effectually than any domineering austerity in words or behaviour ; while vice and folly naturally breed contempt under the most lordly and imperious sway.—Impose not too *heavy tasks* upon them ; make not their lives bitter by cruel bondage lest they *cry unto God* against you : Remember their years, and bear with their frailties and imperfections ; charge them not with faults without cause, nor refuse to hear their just apologies. Remember the reflection of *Job* in the like case, “ If I did despise the cause of my man-
“ servant, or of my maid servant, when they
“ contended with me ; what then shall I do when
“ God riseth up ? And when he visiteth, what
“ shall I answer Him ? Did not He that made
“ me in the womb make him ? And did not one

“fashion us in the womb (p) ?”—Let them have *food* and *rest* convenient for them : For *quality*, let it be such as is suitable to their condition ; for quantity let it be sufficient for their necessary refreshment ; and for *time* and *season*, let it be such as is most conducive to their health and comfort. —Be full as ready to *encourage* them when they do well as to reprove them when they do amiss ; that they may be sensible of your good will to them, as well as your authority over them. “Thou shalt not rule over them with rigour, but shalt fear thy God (q).”

2. But then be watchful against a *weak indulgence* towards them. Improve your just authority over them, for maintaining in the whole of their conduct a *due respect* to God and yourselves. Indulge them in no *known evil* : Recommend to them, both by example and precept, the religious fear of God, and justice and truth to man. Above all, diligently watch over them to preserve them from the infection of *evil company* ; to this end, take an exact account of their time when they are absent from you ; for it is then that they contract their pernicious acquaintance : Especially let your authority be exercised over them for the religious observance of the *Lord's-day*, for many have dated their ruin from the faulty liberties they were *then* indulged in : and how Tradesmen can answer it to God and their own consciences, in leaving their servants *at large* on that day, while they are regaling themselves in their country retreats, is more than I can say : I scarce believe any thing has contributed more to the *corruption* of the rising generation, than neglects of *this* kind. How justly

justly may God upbraid those with selfishness and hypocrisy, who require a strict obedience to *their own* commands, but thus overlook the neglects of *His* holy and righteous laws? Keep them therefore under your eye, and rather spare them time from *your own* business, for an interview with their friends, or other lawful occasions, than let any part of that *sacred time* be spent in a *trifling* or *unbecoming* manner. They may think much of this restraint at present, yet future time and better consideration will cause them to bless you, and bless God for your care concerning them.— Lastly, Be very cautious of sending those to *travel* who are not furnished with sufficient wisdom and virtue to preserve them from the manifold temptations to which they are exposed; and by which many youths have been undone.

9th, *Justice* will excite the Tradesman, (if in those relations in life) to make *due provision* for his *wife and children*. The *wife* brought a considerable portion, in prospect of a comfortable provision; or else hath been useful in the shop or the family, to preserve or encrease your estate, and govern and inspect the affairs of the household; or however she is *bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh*, and hath forsaken her parents and friends, to cast herself upon your love and care: you are bound, therefore, by all sacred and human ties, to secure her comfort as far as lies in your power.—Your *children* are parts of yourself, whom you brought into the world in an helpless and dependent state; it is unnatural and unjust not to support and provide for them: yet such is the idleness and negligence, such the prodigality and voluptuousness of many Tradesmen. that *miserery and tears* are the only inheritance they leave

to their distressed families. The goods are appraised, but they are *few or unsaleable*; the books are examined, but *no comfort* is to be found from them; the poor wife is forced to live upon her *friends*, or pine away in *want*; and the children to wander *desolate* and *forfaken*: O wretched injustice! Can the posterity of such men rise up and call them *blessed*, who make them heirs to nothing but poverty and distress? Or will it excuse them that they have been *just to others*, who are thus cruel to their *own flesh*? No. Limit yourselves in the expences of dress, diet, and furniture; allow yourselves in no unreasonable or costly pleasures; be diligent in your callings, and prudent in your concerns; that you may leave your families *above* the charity of their friends, and enable them to live when your period of life ceases; that your exit may not be like the brutes who have no concern for the offspring they leave behind them. “A good man leaveth an inheritance to his childrens children. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever (r).”

10th, This *Justice* in the Tradesman, obligeth him *to shew mercy to the poor*; for righteousness containeth charity (s). Men are but stewards of what they possess to the great God, who is the original proprietor of all things: As much as is needful for their own use, he allows them to appropriate to themselves, and has appointed the poor and necessitous to be the receivers of the *rest*; we are not therefore “to withhold good from them to whom it is *due*, when ’tis in the power of our hands to do it (t).” We should improve the

(r) Prov. xiii. 22. and Psal. cxii. 3. (s) Psal. cxii. 9.
2 Cor. ix. 9. (t) Prov. iii. 27.

the *talent* of wealth as good servants of our great Master ; and so regulate our expences, and employ our skill and care, that we may be assistant to others ; *working with our hand*, or labouring with our heads, “ the thing that is good, that we may “ have to give to him that needeth(*u*).” The *goodness* of God is his glory ; nor is there a more amiable disposition in his creatures, or any thing that yields greater delight to an humane and pious heart, or is more likely to meet with a generous reward from a good God, than a sincere disposition to imitate him herein. Let the Tradesman therefore in a course of diligence and prudence, trust God with futurity, and *enlarge his heart*, and *extend his compassions* to the proper objects of them.

And here a large field is before you ; either there are some poor *relations* of your own, or God hath some poor *children* of his, whose necessities call for relief.—Or some poor faithful *ministers* of Christ, who instead of living to study and do good, are obliged to study to live and get bread.—Or some poor ingenious *scholars*, who if supported for a time might become instruments of public good.—Or some ignorant and uncultivated persons and places where *lectures* of religion might be usefully established : Or *Bibles* and other *books* of instruction, beneficially dispersed ;—or some sober *youths*, whose parents are unable to place them to trades : And others that have skill and parts, but no stock to begin with.—Or some poor *Tradesmen*, and house-keepers, that often want work ~~and~~ therefore want bread : or whose families are large and their afflictions many ; whose modesty unfits them for asking ; and therefore languish
and

(*u*) Eph. iv. 28.

and pine in distress.—Or some virtuous *maiden* whom a little money would settle in employments or marriage, but being indigent and neglected, are exposed to many temptations,—besides schools for the *young*, relief for the *sick* or *lame*, and assistance for the *aged* and *helpless*. All which are proper and necessary objects for your charity, as far as your abilities extend.

And that you may be free and liberal herein, *lay by* for this purpose, in some due proportion, “as God has blessed you (*w*),” either weekly, monthly, or yearly, as the nature of your incomes are: This method will free you from the uncertainty that those must be under who only occasionally stretch forth their hands as objects offer: and having thus a stock *devoted* to sacred and charitable uses, you will be much more free on all proper occasions to exercise your bounty and liberality: Always judging that well ordered charity is the *surest* and *safest* way to thrive; as what is expended this way is lent on the best security, and the largest interest (*x*); namely on the faithfulness and bounty of God.

11th, *Justice* requires a *punctual regard* to all *lawful contracts*. But as this is a branch of that *truth* which is due from man to man, I shall take notice of it under that head.

12th, Lastly, *Justice* demands a *speedy restitution* of whatever may have been *unlawfully* gained, or acquired. This is a duty so evident, that one would think little need be said to prove it necessary. 1. *Religion* requires it; conscience can never be pacified, nor guilt removed, while the gains of injustice are in our hands; nor that repentance be
sincere

(w) 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

(x) Prov. xix. 17. ch. iii. 9

sincere, which is not attended with a real purpose and resolution to restore what has been *iniquitously* gotten : For repentance is the *undoing*, as far as we are able, what has been done amiss ; if it was criminal for you to injure your neighbour at first, the crime still remains, while you continue voluntarily to detain from him what is his due : And therefore God commanded, that “ when any “ trespassed against the Lord,” *i. e.* by defrauding another (and observe by the way, that though men are the immediate objects, yet God esteems injustice to them as done against Himself, because it is the violation of His law, and the contempt of His authority) “ then shall they confess their sin, “ and recompence the trespass with the principal and add the fifth part thereto, and give it to “ him against whom he hath trespassed,” as a satisfaction for the inconveniencies that the injured party might have suffered (y) : The *moral equity* of which law binds the consciences of *all* men to the end of time.—When *Nehemiah* had engaged the Jews, who had been guilty of oppression, to a promise of restoring what they were unrighteously possessed of, he adds this divine commination : “ God so shake out every man from his “ house and from his labour, that performeth “ not his promise; even thus shall he be shaken and “ emptied ; and all the people said Amen (z).” And *Zaccheus* immediately fell under the conviction of *this* duty ; when our blessed Saviour invited Himself to his house, he knew no better proof that he could give him of the sense he had of his past errors and the sincerity of his present affection, than engaging himself, “ where he had in-
“ jured

(y) Numb. v. 6, 7.

(z) Nehem. v. 1—13.

“injured any man, whether good or bad, rich or poor, king or subject, presently to restore fourfold (a).” This shews, that the natural consciences of men own *restitution* as a duty; and if ever salvation come to your house, and the influence of religion upon your hearts, you will go and do likewise.

2. *Interest* requires it. While GOD is the righteous Governor of the world, the gains of *injustice* can never be blessings to the possessors of them. They are often blown away by the blast of God, like chaff before the wind; but if they remain, the divine *curse* remains with them; and like the *leprosy*, spreads infection to all that you possess. Now who would lose the comfort of all the honest gain they have for the sake of retaining a little that may be unjustly acquired? Take therefore thy ill gotten goods in thy hand, as the philosopher did his estate when he threw it into the sea, and resolve that it is better that these things be destroyed *by me*, than *I for them*; and esteem it a thousand times preferable to live poor and just, and die blessed; than to live and die with a curse.—If you are *incapable* of making restitution, though the will may be accepted instead of the deed, yet surely you ought to *mourn* with peculiar bitterness that you have done injuries to others, which you are not able to repair. You should reflect on the hand of GOD, and acknowledge his justice, in rendering your unrighteousness to *unprofitable* to you; and remember that the obligation *still lies upon you* to make restitution when, and in what degree soever you are capable—If the fear of shame and loss of reputation, deter you from this instance of justice, choose some faithful friend

(a) Luke xix. 8.

friend to restore the owner his right, and then your name need not be known, or your character sullied; and let it be observed, that to sin, is shame, and that is *past*, it is only righteousness and equity, which is to be practiced *now*; what shame can it be to do that which is *good*, and undo that which is *evil*? But if your foolish shame or base covetousness prevent your execution of justice; remember that it will not be long before your iniquities will be charged upon you in the presence of God, of angels and men; and what unspeakable shame and confusion will then cover your face, when it shall be found that after all the remonstrances of reason and conscience, you have *lived and died in these sins*. — If it be objected, that the persons are *dead* whom you have injured, and you know of none to make restitution to; I answer, the *heirs* or *executors* of the deceased have the proper claim to it; and if after diligent enquiry they are not to be found, the divine records have prescribed who are to be the receivers. “If the *injured* man have no kinsman, “or *heir*, to recompense the trespass unto, let “the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord (b).” God’s *church* and *poor* are His receivers of all estates forfeited to His honour and government. As giving to the *poor* is *lending* unto the Lord, where it is an act of benevolence; so it is *paying* unto the Lord what He claims as an act of justice from us.

To conclude: 1. Reflect on your *past conduct* as to this great duty of *justice*. Perhaps your injustice has been so *secretly* managed, that your reputation is not injured by it; but what says conscience? Does not that remember the *unconscionable* bargains, the faulty wares shuffed off by *deceit* and

(b) Numb. v. 8.

and *falsehood* ; the unjust *weights* and *measures* used in trade ; or the *oppression* or *unmercifulness* with which it hath been conducted. Let *conscience* survey the foregoing particulars, and see wherein you have been guilty ; and give it leave to speak, while it acts the part of a friendly monitor, for speak it will, and the more terrible, the longer it is silenced. Shut not your eyes against the light, nor frame any excuses for yourself *now*, that will not stand the test of the *great judgment-day* : “ Break off your sins “ by righteousness, and your iniquities by shewing “ mercy (c) ” And seek the divine forgiveness by a sincere *repentance* before GOD, and an humble *faith* in Christ Jesus the Lord, while forgiveness may be had.

2. Let all your actions be regulated by the rules of *justice* for the *time to come* ; and reckon nothing really gained, but what you gain honestly. Be advised ever to *take the safer path* in doubtful cases ; do that which appears to be the most honourable, just and charitable ; and run not always to the utmost extent of lawfulness, for he that always walks as near to the river's brink as he can, is in extreme danger of falling in. In matters of *duty* it is usually best to do the *most*, but in matters of *advantage* to take the *least* : For we are naturally too much biassed by selfishness. Shew favour to the poor, ingenuity to the unskilful, and moderation and equity to all : And let it be your fixed purpose, by the grace of GOD, that though you may not be very rich, yet you will be always very *just* : This is the way to a quiet conscience, and a firm estate ; you may then enjoy with pleasure, and leave with comfort to your posterity, whatever acquisitions a diligent hand,

hand and a good God has afforded you. — To which end, 1. *Let the fear of God rule in your hearts.* Fear of shame may restrain men from many instances of injustice, but nothing less than the religious fear of God, will make them universally just and honest. — 2. Conquer your *undue love to the world.* A covetous and selfish temper is the grand spring of all injustice and oppression : Men would never expose themselves to the anger of God, injure their neighbours, and hazard their reputation for a little gain, if their love to it was not excessive and criminal. — 3. *Learn contentment in your present state, and trust in God for futurity.* His providence over-rules and directs all the conditions of His creatures ; *He knows what things we have need of,* and what would be *hurtful* to us, and will be sure to secure the best good to those who place their confidence in Him : But men would fain be independent beings ; and those whose disobedience and neglect of God, has produced a consciousness in themselves that they have no just title to his favour, are unwilling to lie at his mercy, and desirous *by any means* to procure those blessings to themselves, which they had no claim to ask at his hands : but though *justice* and *equity* may in some instances obstruct the christian's gain, yet let him not doubt but God will abundantly make it up in temporal or spiritual blessings, or both : He is too great and too good, to permit his servants to be losers by any thing they deny themselves, in obedience to His will. — 4. *Love your neighbour as yourself,* and place yourself in his *stead* in all your dealings with him ; it is certain you will then do nothing that is unjust or dishonourable by him. — 5. Lastly, as *this* and *every* other virtue and grace must be derived from Christ Jesus,

Jesus, the fountain of all wisdom and grace; so let the practice of it be *recommended to God*, by a true and living faith in Him as the great Mediator. Then, whatever your success is here below, you will not fail of an abundant reward above, in the presence and favour of the just and righteous God: But let no man be so vain as to think, that the christian *faith* and *profession* will profit him that contradicts the *precepts* of it: Or that *the righteousness of Christ* was ever designed to justify or save the *unrighteous* dealer.

3. *Promote this justice in others*, as far as you are able. Recommend and instil principles of justice and integrity into your *children* and *servants*; and suffer them not to offer the least wrong to any: Be, and profess yourself to be, an irreconcilable enemy to all *injurious* and *deceitful dealing*.—Stand not by patiently, while *others* are injured and imposed upon; at least, be not partakers with them. In many instances, he that *hinders not* an injury when he might, makes it *his own*.—Improve the interest and influence you have in your several *societies*, to reform what is amiss in this respect.—This is the way to honour the gospel, and stop the calumnies of its enemies, to establish a good reputation among men: to live in peace, and die in comfort (through the grace of the Redeemer) and leave a blessing behind you. *Amen.*

“ Their father Israel said,—Take double money
 “ in your hand: And the money that was brought
 “ again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again
 “ in your hand; peradventure it was *an oversight*,
 “ Gen. xliii. 12.

“ Thou

" Thou shalt not *steal*.—Thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbour's house,—or any thing that is thy neighbour's, *Exod. xx. 15, 17.*

" Thou shalt not *defraud* thy neighbour, neither *rob* him : The wages of him that is hired shall not *abide with thee* all night until the morning.—Ye shall do *no unrighteousness in judgment*, *in mete yard, in weight, or in measure, Lev. xix. 13—35.*

" For all that do such things, and all that do *unrighteously*, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God, &c. *Deut. xxv. 13—16.*

" He hath *swallowed down* riches, he shall vomit them up again : God shall cast them out of his belly.—Because he hath *oppressed and forsaken* the poor.—Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he hath desired.—In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.—A fire not blown shall consume him ; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.—The heavens shall reveal his iniquity, &c. *Job xx. 15—27.*

" Treasures of *wickedness* profit nothing.—Blessings are upon the head of the *just*, *Prov. x. 2, 6.*

" A man shall not be established by *wickedness* : But the house of the *righteous* shall stand, *Prov. xii. 2, 7.*

" Better is a little with *righteousness*, than great revenues *without right*, *Prov. xvi. 8.*

" The just man walketh in his *integrity* : His children are blessed after him.—Bread of *deceit* is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.—An inheritance may be gotten *hastily* at the beginning : But the end thereof shall not be blessed, *Prov. xx. 7, 17, 21.*

" It

“ It is joy to the just to do judgment, Prov. xxi. 15.

“ He that by *usury* and *unjust gain* increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. — A faithful man shall abound with blessings: But he that *maketh haste* to be rich, shall not be unpunished, Prov. xxviii. 8, 20.

“ As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: So he that getteth riches, and *not by right*, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool, Jerem. xvii. 11.

“ Wo unto him that buildeth his house by *unrighteousness*, and his chambers by *wrong*; that useth his neighbour's service *without wages*, and giveth him not for his work, Jer. xxii. 13.

“ Thou hast taken *usury* and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me saith the Lord. — Behold I have smitten mine hand at thy *dishonest gain* which thou hast made. — Can thine heart endure, or thy hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it, Ezek. xxii. 12—14.

“ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy *traffic*; therefore will I bring forth a fire which shall devour thee, in the sight of all them that behold thee, Ezek. xxviii. 18.

“ The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and *unrighteousness* of men. — God gave them over to a reprobate mind. — Being filled with all *unrighteousness*, *covetousness*, *deceit*, *covenant-breakers*, &c. Rom. i. 18, 29—31.

“ That

“ That no man go beyond (or over-reach) and
 “ defraud his brother in any matter : because the
 “ Lord is the avenger of all such, 1 *Theff* iv. 6.
 “ *Psal.* xv. 1—5. *Isa.* xxxiii. 15. *Colos.* iii. 25.

C H A P. VI.

Of Truth.

§ I. *The nature of truth.*—§ II. *Obligations to the practice of it.*—*Excuses for lying considered.*—§ III. *Wherein truth, as it relates to trade, is to be exercised.*—*In the performance of all lawful contracts and promises.*—*In not concealing that truth which justice or charity obliges us to divulge.*—*In forbearing all unjust commendations of goods.*—*In shunning unjust disparagements of persons and things.*—*And all equivocations and disguises in our dealings.*—*In restraining a multiplicity of words.*—*In the cautious taking, and careful keeping of oaths.*—§ IV. *Dissuasives from lying.*—*Means to promote a disposition to truth, and the practice of it.*—*Suitable Scriptures.*

§ I. **A**S to the nature of Truth, we may observe that it either is the agreement of our expressions to the nature of things, or to our knowledge, or apprehensions of them. Our expres-

expressions may agree with our conceptions of things, but not with their nature; in which case we call the falshood a *mistake* or *error*. This is indeed a soft term, and implies but little blame; yet even this is culpable, when the means of knowledge are afforded us: For that law that requires us to *do* our duty, requires a care to *inform* ourselves about it in order thereto. On the other hand, if our *expressions* do not agree with our conceptions, it is *lying*; though they may happen to agree with the nature of the thing. For here is a design to *misrepresent* it: and as our words are understood to express more immediately our own conceptions, here is in fact an intended false representation. Whatever the thing is, we design another should believe we think it to be what we really imagine it is not. This however is not the case when we only rehearse a lie in an *historical* manner, and make it not our own. And I must observe here, that persons may *act* as well as speak a lie: for words are but the mode of expressing our apprehensions, which may as strongly be signified by actions; for instance, “ the man
 “ that lives as if he had the estate he knows he
 “ has not; or was what indeed he knows he is
 “ not, doth as truly lie, as if he was continually
 “ to express it by words; if it be done with a
 “ design to injure and deceive others*.”——So that you may perceive that every *mistake* is not a lie, nor every *doubtful speech*, nor every *parable* or *fable*, nor the *rehearsing* of a lie, if we make it not our own: But a lie, is the *voluntary falsifying* of the truth, and is usually joined with an *intention to deceive*.

§ II.

* See Religion of Nature delineated.

§ II. Let every Tradesman endeavour to judge of things *as they are*; and speak of them, when he is properly called thereto *according to* such his judgment: Neither adding nor diminishing; neither depreciating a commodity, nor putting false colours upon it, but “speak the truth in his heart (a):” And this from conscience to God, and a love to virtue. To this he is bound by the rules of *reason* and *religion*, of *honour* and *interest*.

I. As every man requires to be *truly* dealt with himself, and hates to be deceived, or imposed upon by falshood; *reason* evinces the fitness and obligation of treating *others* in the same manner: For with what face can we desire that all men should act by the rules of sincerity and truth to us, while we make falshood and fraud the measure of our conduct to them? If *truth* is eligible from others *to you*, why should it not be equally so *from you* to them? It is manifest that all civil society must be dissolved without it; that falshood breaks the bonds, and destroys the confidence that is necessary thereunto; for how can men converse or trade together, if they are not to be *believed*? And how can they expect to be believed, unless they *constantly speak the truth*? He that will *lie* for one thing, at one time, may reasonably be supposed capable of doing it at any time, or in any case. It may further be observed, that truth and justice have such a relation to each other, that he cannot be *just* in his dealings, that is *false* in his words. Surely every one’s indignation should be awakened against a vice which thus destroys the common good of mankind.—It is evident that speech was given us, that we might signify or express our minds to each other; but lying and falshood,

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directly

(a) Psal. xv. 2.

directly contradict this end ; so that a *dumb* man is better than a *liar*.

2. *Religion* certainly lays us under the strongest obligations to *truth* and sincerity. We worship and serve the God of *Truth* ; the revelation we believe, is the gospel of *Truth* ; the precepts of religion every where enforce the love and practice of *truth* ; it is the very character of all that sincerely profess it, that they *hate lying*, and *love truth* (b). And so contrary is the indulgence of *falsehood* and *deceit* to the spirit of our holy religion, that it utterly *excludes* the practicers of it, from any share in the blessings of the gospel, or hopes of salvation (c). Yea, there is such an evident contradiction between a *false* man, and a *true* christian, that it is a wonder how any can make pretensions to the last character, whose conduct lays them under the censure of the former.

3. And not only reason and religion, but *honour* and *interest* should engage men to be exactly *true* and upright in their words. There is a real nobleness of spirit, and true courage, in speaking the truth : How strongly doth conscience support the man of veracity, so that no frowns can daunt him ! Whereas the *liar* is the reproach of humanity ; and the most distant imputation of so infamous a character is highly resented by every man of honour : He who knows himself to be guilty, feels a sting in his conscience, when none else can accuse him ; and shame and confusion fills his face, when he is detected : Nothing but sordid hopes, or sordid fears, can prevent the tongue from being the true interpreter of the mind. Thus does *honour*

(b) Psal. xv. 2—4. (c) Prov. xxi. 5. Prov. xix. 9. Eccl. v. 6. Rev. xxi. 8, 27. Chap. xxii. 15.

~~now~~ plead for it ; and certainly it is not less for a man's *interest* to be *true* to his word. It is the most effectual way to maintain and support his credit : Such a person shall be believed in doubtful things, when a solemn oath is not sufficient to gain him credit, who allows himself in lying and deceit. When men of falshood and deceit have affrighted those that know them from dealing with them, they will find that justice and truth are greater recommendations, than the fairest sign they can hang out.

Three *excuses* are usually made for this base sin of *lying*.

Some plead the *examples* of others : They see it daily practised and find some instances of good men failing in this way ; and therefore think they may safely venture upon it. — It must indeed be allowed, though a sad truth, that multitudes, who even call themselves by the honourable name of *christians*, are guilty herein ; but by the same plea, treason against the king would become allowable if the number of rebels was great ; and the more contempt is cast upon God and his government, so much the greater sanction men would have for rebellion against him ; and every addition to the number of iniquities, would lessen our obligations to obedience. Who is there that sees not the fallacy of such a plea ? Can you think that the number of *guilty* worms of the earth, will be any screen from the resentments of God's infinite power and justice ? Or that He will forbear to vindicate the honour of his laws, because transgressors are multiplied ; when this is the very reason that makes *vengeance* necessary to be inflicted ? Try whether it will reconcile you to the anguish, and minister consolation amidst the flames

of hell, that multitudes of the “wicked, and the “nations of those that forget God (d), shall be “turned into it,” before you plead *numbers* as a prescription for iniquity. — As to the failings of *good* men this way, they should be subjects of *caution* to us, and not of imitation; they shew us the frailty of human nature, and the necessity of constant watchfulness over ourselves: And let it be observed, that in the several scripture examples of falsehood, it was usually produced by *fear*, and never contrived for *gain*, as in the cases of *Abraham*, *David*, *Peter*, &c. And yet no doubt, even for these their souls were deeply humbled. But what are these *unusual* cases to you, who make a *common practice* of this vice? Do you think the omniscient God knows not how to discern the disallowed, unrepeatable weakness of an *upright* heart, from the perverse and wilful disobedience of a *vicious* mind. When you are thus encouraging yourselves herein by scripture examples, omit not the cases of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, who both ended their lives with a *lye*, Acts v.

Another excuse is, the *smallness* of the sin, *Lying*, say they, is not swearing, nor killing or stealing: There can be no great harm *in it*, for we do no great hurt *by it*. To which it may be replied, That the sin cannot be *little*, which renders men most unlike to the God of truth, and most like the devil, the *father of lies*? That affronts the authority of heaven, and disturbs the peace of society, and which the good God sees fit to punish with such bitter destruction? But if *lying* were indeed so *small* a crime as men would persuade themselves it is, how many little rents can you contentedly bear in your garments? Or how many little
motes

(d) Psal. ix. 17.

motes in your eye? Or little incisions in your flesh? And is every little injury worthy your watchfulness and care; but those which concern the honour of God, and the rectitude and happiness of your own souls? the only things that merit any great concern. — But the *smallness* of the sin you plead as an excuse, is really an aggravation of repeated crimes; if you think it too much to part with little sins in obedience to the blessed God, how can it be supposed you are willing to part with greater? Surely, he that will not deny a lust to please his God and Saviour, will never lay down his life, or part with his possessions for him, when that becomes his duty. The habitual indulgence of little sins, are *more aggravated* than the commission of greater, through the hurries and surprize of temptation; because they evidence less love to God, and less concern to please Him.

Others would *excuse* themselves, by saying, *necessity compels them to it*, there is *no trading* without lying, customers are so *humorsome*, that they make deceit and falshood necessary. — A sad case indeed if true! That the lawful callings of life, cannot be exercised with truth, and a good conscience; and that the righteous Governor of the universe has placed men in such situations of life, as make affronts to his Majesty, and violations of their own consciences, necessary to their subsistence! We may then with great propriety write upon every Tradesman's door, as in times of pestilence; *The Lord have mercy upon them*; and confine honour and integrity, religion and salvation, to the nobility and gentry. — But who can look on such a representation of things, without discerning the *fallacy* of it, and being confounded at the *base reflections* that are thereby cast on the God of

truth and goodness ! Canst thou indeed lift up thy face to heaven, and say, *Lord GOD of heaven and earth, thou knowest, that from a sincere concern to please Thee, and with a steady trust in Thy good providence, I have long confined myself to a strict regard to truth in all my words and dealings ; and I appeal to Thee, that I did not forsake the rules of truth, until I found poverty, and ruin coming upon me, which I could not in any other way prevent.* Canst thou who pleadest *to enjoy* for lying, in thy conscience say, that this has been thy practice, and is now thy experience ? If not, be ashamed ever to make such a plea more, until thou hast a better foundation for it.—But this excuse appears still more vain, from the strict regard that is paid to truth and veracity by persons in your *own callings*, or at least in callings equally exposed to temptations of this kind ; of which hundreds may be found, who yet gain sufficiently by them. — I have been the larger upon this, because the same answers will serve to confute most of those vain pleas which men make to silence the conviction of their own minds, and encourage themselves in vice and immorality.

§ III. We proceed to consider *wherein truth is to be exercised.* It is not to be strained so far as to oblige the Tradesman always to declare *the whole* of what he knows : Neither the price that his goods *cost* him ; nor where or how he is furnished with them ; nor where his customers may be served *cheaper* : or any of the *lawful secrets* of his business, which might tend to his prejudice ? For though we may not lie upon the watch to deceive and over-reach others, we may stand upon our guard, and not betray or injure ourselves. But

1st, This *truth* obliges to the performance of all lawful contracts and promises. Prudence will direct you to be cautious what promises you make, and what engagements you enter into, that they are equitable and convenient, as well as lawful and possible: But when your word is past, though they may be *difficult* and *prejudicial* to perform; and none may be witnesses to your promises and contracts, yet God and conscience require you to make them good, unless the party concerned is willing to release you: For these are the bonds of human society, which being dissolved, men can neither securely trust or trade with each other. The righteous man, though "he sweareth to his own hurt, changeth not (e)." Who, indeed, can proceed with comfort or safety in business, that depend upon *faithless* men, who neither regard what they say, nor what they promise? And it must be added here, that a promise or contract made by a *servant* whom you are used to trust, is equally binding as if made by yourself; for if you would adhere to his contract if it was advantageous, you ought not to recede from it, though it be prejudicial—Indeed if you are imposed upon in the *substance* of the thing agreed for, as copper for gold, or the like, the contract is void in itself; for there was no consent, which is necessary in a bargain; the vendor sold one thing, and the buyer purchased or agreed for another.

This *truth* likewise requires workmen and others, to perform their engagements in the *time* and *manner* they have promised; which is what too many pay little regard unto. The common excuse is, something came in to hinder, other

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work

(e) Psalm xv.

work in more haste, or of more profit, or the like : I answer, your promises then should be *conditional*, and such as the employer will admit of, or else you may wrong him to profit yourselves, and please others ; and in cases of unavoidable necessity, apply yourself to the person, and endeavour to satisfy him if you would preserve a good conscience, and a fair character : And be cautious in all cases of making *hasty* promises.

Again, they deviate from *truth* and justice, who agree for a commodity, but the price falling, or some other contingency happening, never come for it, or refuse to have it. — And others, who promise to pay their bills or debts on such a day, but when the time comes, there is no money, nor perhaps any message to ask longer time. These omissions, though only made through negligence, or such like causes, are nevertheless very culpable ; as society is thereby disordered and conscience violated.

2. The business of concealing material faults in any commodity has been considered under the head of justice : but if you have any other cause to know that the bargain will turn considerably to the disadvantage of your customer, and the forbearing of it will not be an equal prejudice to you ; the *royal law* of love and equity, obliges you to give him warning of it. — By the same rule, you ought not to pay *coin* that is *defective* in goodness or value, but plainly tell them your suspicion of it ; for otherwise you *deceive* them in deeds, if not in words : And you will find it an unsound conclusion at last, that you have a right to impose upon others, because others have imposed upon you.

3d, *Truth* is to be shewn by *forbearing all unjust commendations* of your goods; either as to quality or price. If you do this ignorantly it is culpable, because you ought to *hesitate* about that which you are uncertain of: But if you know they do not deserve commendation, or at least, so much as you bestow upon them; it is a manifest breach of *truth* and justice. For instance, to pretend that a commodity is of *one kind or country*, when it is of another.—That it is *faultless*, when the faults are only covered.—That it was made by such an *esteemed* workman, and cost such a *price*; when it is neither one, nor the other.—That it is *new*, or the *newest fashioned*, when it is manifestly old.—Or that you have *refused so much* money for it, when you know it was never offered to you. These and such like *falsehoods*, which Tradesmen often indulge themselves in, must certainly proceed from an hardened heart, and a seared conscience: It is incredible that men who profess to believe an *omniscient* God, and a *future judgment* of final retribution, should dare from day to day, to tell an hundred lies, to gain as many pence; and damn their souls, to obtain that which they would not refuse to expend the next moment upon their dogs. I beseech thee, friend, pretend no more to religion or conscience; especially, dishonour not the *christian* name by falsely assuming that to thyself, but own thyself to be what indeed thou art, an *atheist* or an *infidel*; or else reform thy practice, and resolve, by the help of God, that if *truth* will not maintain you, *falsehood* never shall: For, “the getting treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro only of them that seek death (f).”

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4th,

(f) Prov. xxi. 9.

4th, This *truth* also forbids *all unjust disparagement* of persons and things. It is too common for the buyer to say, *it is naught, it is naught*, who when he goeth his way *rejoiceth*. But the gain that is got by such artifices, is far from balancing the guilt that is contracted thereby; and their tongues give the lie to their consciences. Forge not therefore causeless exceptions; things that are manifestly good or cheap, allow them to be; otherwise you disparage your own judgments or sincerity, more than the goods which you discommend. Things that are evidently faulty or dear, may be plainly, yet modestly, complained of. And those that are doubtful, should only be spoken doubtfully of.—And let the same caution and tenderness be extended to your *fellow Tradesman*; discommend not his character or goods without cause, from any selfish or malicious views: Remember that your tongues are not your own, to enhance or depress what you please: but that you are as accountable to God for your *words* (g), as your actions: And the let sins of this nature fall under the notice of human laws, so much the more obnoxious they are to the infinite justice of God.

5th, *Truth* excludes *all equivocations and disguises* in our dealings with others. The design of speech, is to signify our minds to one another; but when it is clouded with *ambiguities*, and mental *refractions*, with a design to deceive; the end is frustrated, our neighbour is imposed upon, and our words are no better than *vanity*. Your expressions are, perhaps, in one sense true, but false in another; in which you believe the person you speak to will take them, and in which you de-

sign

sign that he should : Or you speak out so much as may deceive others, and reserve so much in your own mind, as added to the rest, would contradict what you offer as truth : But as the thief *disguised*, is as hateful and dangerous, as he that is open ; so all such *hypocritical* dealing, is as contrary to truth and integrity, as plainer falsehoods, and should be as much detested.—It is true, we are not always obliged to tell *all* we know, and some disguises may be allowed, when an impertinent curiosity, or a designing craft, would extort from us truths which we are not bound to discover ; but the upright Tradesman, as he should be a *wise* man, so he will usually be a *plain* one ; and speak as he thinks, and act as he speaks : For it has too strong a tincture of knavery, when our speech, like *Ap'lo's* oracles, may be understood in a fair, or a fatal sense. None are pleased with such deceitful dealing to themselves, and none should practise it with others.

6th, This *veracity* will restrain a *multiplicity of words* in our trading or converse. These the sacred scripture every where condemns ; it censures it as *folly* ; “ A fool’s voice is known by the multitude of words (*b*).” “ Seest thou a man hasty in his words, there is more hope of a fool than of him (*i*).” It condemns it as *Sin* ; “ In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin (*k*).” And yet what a *shed of words* are poured out about the smallest traffic ? The seller commonly asketh unreasonably high, while the buyer as commonly offers unreasonably low ; and a long controversy there is before they come together ;

(*b*) Eccles. v. 3. (*i*) Prov. xxix. 20. (*k*) Prov. x. 19.

ther: The one affirming, he will give *no more*, and the other as positively saying, he will take *no less*; and both receding from their words before they have done. Though it is confessed, that every alteration of mind is not a *lie*, and men may see cause in buying and selling so to do; yet when these positive declarations are made, without the design of adhering to them, which I believe is usually the case, I cannot see how the minds of men can acquit them from the charge of *falsehood*. Sure I am, if *covetousness* did not bias men on one side, and *injustice* on the other, business might be dispatched in two words, as well as two hundred. —Let the Tradesman therefore be persuaded to content himself with a reasonable profit; in small things to fix his price *at once*, and in greater to come *as near* to the mark as may be; if he would transact his business with ease and pleasure, establish a good reputation, and secure a good conscience. A little resolution and practice, will make this method easy; it has been practised by many with good success; and I am satisfied, that none who ever used themselves to this way, from a principle of integrity and justice, had ever cause to repent it.

7th, *Truth* certainly obliges men to be *cautious in making*, and *careful in keeping oaths and covenants*. Perjury, common as it is, is almost as great a crime as men are capable of committing: It is a *defiance* of the God of heaven, to whom the appeal is made; it proclaims the person who can be guilty of it, destitute of the *fear of God*, or *regard to men*; and is utterly destructive to all *human society*: For what bond can hold that man that *sacred oaths* will not? There cannot possibly be any security in civil order or government, where these

are broken through, and violated. It is no breach of charity to suppose that person capable of all imaginary evil, who can allow himself to be guilty of *perjury* and *perfidiousness* — And as it is exceeding evil in its nature, it is no less so in its consequences, bringing down the *judgments of God* on nations (*l*), families (*m*), and persons (*n*). And being the seed of self-tormenting desperation to those who commit it: Even the *heathens* thought that man and his family *destined to destruction*, that was guilty of it.—And yet, how does this nation groan under the weight of this evil? What numberless *perjuries* are continually committed, to the horror and amazement of all considerate minds? Arising no doubt, in some degree, from the number of unnecessary, impossible oaths, which are forced upon men, on various occasions. An evil, which it were to be wished the legislature would attend to, as none else can provide a remedy for it.

§ IV. Upon the whole, how *absurd* and *foolish* a part do they act, who expose themselves to the just resentment of heaven, violate their own consciences, and prostitute their reputations, by *deceit* and *falsehood*, to gain that which might more effectually be secured by truth and integrity? And which when it is obtained by such means, can afford no true satisfaction! The God of truth can never bestow *his blessing* upon it; that were to give a sanction to the rebellion of his creatures against himself, and to smile on what his soul abhors; and what real comfort or good can men expect from their acquisitions without this? Does wealth when gotten render men independent on God, and raise

(*l*) 2 Sam. xxi. 1---3. Jer. xxiii. 10. (*m*) Zech. v. 3, 4. (*n*) Ezek. xvii.

raise them above the strokes of his just providence? Can not he send sickness and lollies, blast their designs, and frustrate all their schemes for wealth and happiness; and “cause them to labour in the “very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity (2)”? And after they have spent a life of sorrow and disappointment here, banish them into hell. Or if he should, in just judgment, permit a *lying* tongue to be successful; can the wealth gained thereby be considered in any other light, than as a *dead weight* to sink them the deeper into perdition? Where is men’s wisdom or sagacity? Where is there love to themselves, in pursuing a course attended with such evil consequences?—If you value therefore your *external* credit; if you value your *internal* comfort, or your *eternal* happiness; banish from you *lying lips*. Let *truth* and *integrity* rule in your shops; let them rule in your hearts; and be your constant attendants in every business and company. Recommend them to your children, and charge them upon your servants; for if you permit them to *lie* for your advantage, they will not scruple to do it to your prejudice. And whenever you have been defective in regard to truth, shew the sincerity of your concern for it by sincere repentance and universal reformation. To which end,

1. *Subdue covetousness*. He that loveth money better than God and conscience, will for money displease God and conscience, by this or any other sin. Covetousness is the root of falsehood, and many other vices.—2. Learn to *trust* God and his *providence* in the way of duty. This will set you above every mean and unworthy artifice; for he that believes and considers that he depends
upon

upon God for all things, will easily perceive that the practice of virtue, and not of vice, is the means to be blessed by him. — 3. Preserve upon your minds a continual apprehension of the exceeding baseness and evil of lying. Men would not so readily commit sins of any kind, if their consciences were not stupid and insensible of the evil nature of them — 4. Let the presence of God be a curb to you, whenever you are tempted to this sin. Surely none can dare to tell a deliberate untruth, who seriously considers himself in the continual presence of the God of truth: How can those lift up their faces with comfort to Him in prayer at night, who have thus assented His Truth and Omniscience in the day. — 5. Effectually stick to God for his renewing and sanctifying grace, and labour to attain an holy frame of mind. It is a vain attempt to purify the streams of vice, while the fountain of iniquity, a corrupt nature, remains in all its vigour: But when that is cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God; then only will the issues from it be pure and acceptable. “A renewed conscience is the great preservative from all evil.”

Thus I have set before you, the nature and necessity of venerable truth, and endeavoured to excite you to the practice of it; what impression it has made upon your hearts, God only knows; but this I must say, that if these arguments prevail not with you, God has one which will do so effectually, for he hath said, “That the mouth of them that speak lies, shall be stopped (p).”

—Ye

“ Ye shall not steal, neither deal *falsly*, neither
 “ lie one to another, *Lev.* xix. 11.

“ Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle ?
 “ Who shall dwell in thy holy hill ?— He that
 “ walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
 “ and speaketh the *truth* in his heart. — That
 “ *sweareth* to his own hurt, and *changeth not*,
 “ *Psa.* xv. 1—4.

“ What man is he that desireth life, and loveth
 “ many days, that he may see good.—Keep thy
 “ tongue from *evil*, and thy lips from speaking
 “ *guile*, *Psal.* xxxiv. 12, 13.

“ Thou givest thy mouth to *evil*, and thy
 “ tongue frameth *deceit*. — Thou thoughtest that
 “ I was altogether such an one as thyself : But I
 “ will reprove thee, and set them in order before
 “ thine eyes, &c. *Psal.* l. 19—22.

“ He that worketh *deceit* shall not dwell within
 “ my house : He that telleth *lies*, shall not tarry
 “ in my sight, *Psal.* ci. 7.

“ I hate and abhor *lying* : But thy law do I
 “ love, *Psal.* cxix. 163.

“ These six things doth the Lord hate ; yea
 “ seven are an abomination unto him ;—A proud
 “ look, a *lying* tongue, &c. *Prov.* vi. 16, 17.

“ The lip of *truth* shall be established for ever ;
 “ but a *lying* tongue is but for a moment.—*Lying*
 “ lips are abomination to the Lord ; but they that
 “ deal *truly* are his delight, *Prov.* xii. 19—22.

“ A righteous man hateth *lying* : But a wicked
 “ man (*or liar*) is loathsome, and cometh to
 “ shame, *Prov.* xiii. 5.

“ A *false* witness shall not be unpunished, and
 “ he that speaketh *lies* shall not escape, — Shall
 “ perish, *Prov.* xix. 5, 9.

“ *Deceive not with thy lips, Prov. xxiv. 28.*

“ They bend their tongues like their bow for
“ *lies*, and know not me, saith the Lord. — They
“ will *deceive* every one his neighbour, and will
“ not speak the *truth* : They have taught their
“ tongue to speak *lies*, and weary themselves to
“ commit iniquity. — Shall I not visit them for
“ these things, saith the Lord ? Shall not my soul
“ be avenged on such a nation as this ? *Jerem.*
“ *xi. 3—9.*

“ The Inhabitants thereof have spoken *lies*,
“ and their tongue is *deceitful* in their mouth. —
“ Therefore will I make thee sick in mistaking thee,
“ &c. *Mic. vi. 12, 13.*

“ These are the things that ye shall do, speak ye
“ every man truth to his neighbour : execute the
“ judgment of *truth* and peace in your gates,
“ *Zech. viii. 16.*

“ Ye are of your father the devil, an' the
“ lusts of your father ye will do ; he abode not
“ in the *truth*, because there is no truth in him.
“ When he speaketh a *lie*, he speaketh of his
“ own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it, *John*
“ *viii. 44.*

“ Put on the new man, which after God is
“ created in righteousness, and true holiness, (*or*
“ *holiness of truth*). — Wherefore, putting away
“ *lying*, speak every man *truth* with his neigh-
“ bour : For we are members one of another,
“ *Ephes. iv. 24, 25.*

“ *Lye not* one to another, seeing ye have put off
“ the old man with his deeds, *Colos. iii. 9.*

“ Without are dogs, and forcerers, and whore-
“ mongers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a
“ *lye*, *Rev. xxii. 15.*

C H A P T E R I.

O F C O N T E N T M E N T.

- § I. *The nature of Christian Contentment.* —
 § II. *Instances where Christian Contentment is to exercise it.* — In the many undergoing the inconvenciences of this life. — In a thankful acknowledgment of the advantages of it. — In a justifying of our own losses and disappointments, by comparing those vices which are contrary to contentment, as ambition, envy, covetousness, dependency, and invidiousness, &c. — In a steady continuance in our business, under all disadvantages. — § III. *Contentment enforced by various considerations.* — § IV. *Means to attain it.* — *Scriptures suited to the subject.*

§ I. **C**ONTENTMENT, as it relates to this subject, is a *cheerful satisfaction* in the place and calling wherein God hath set us. As there is a *natural stupidity* in some persons, so there is a *stoical pride* in others, who would endeavour to appear indifferent in every state and circumstance of life, from an obstinate and self-sufficient temper of mind: But *christian contentment* is a more noble thing, arising from a becoming sense of God's dominion over us, as our Lord and Owner, who may therefore do as he pleases with his own; and

and an humble trust in Him as our Father and Friend, whose wisdom and goodness directs every part of his dispensations towards us, the low, afflicted situations of life, as well as the more pleasurable and prosperous ones; and these persuasions, by divine grace, enable us "to learn in " whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content."—But, alas, where is this amiable virtue to be found? Men are usually *unsatisfied* with their present condition, longing after some *change* or *alteration*, which when they have attained, they are as far from happiness as they were before*. The child or servant, weary of restraint, longs for the liberty of the parent or master.—The parent or master weary of his cares and troubles, wishes for retirement and ease.—The unmarried are not contented with their condition; and the married often less with theirs.—The poor envy the plenty of the rich: and the rich admire the quiet and health of the poor.—Nor is the Tradesman free from this restless distemper; often preferring, not only the gown or the sword, but this or the other trade before his own: And indeed, ever since our father *Adam* grew dissatisfied with the delights of paradise, all his posterity are infected with the same unhappy disease, until the grace of God renews their natures, limits their desires, and shews them a more durable, and substantial good, than the pleasures of time, or the acquisitions of honour

or

* Our very wishes give us not our wish
How distant, oft the thing we doat on most,
From that for which we doat—*Felicity*.
Loose then from earth, the grasp of fond desire,
Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.

Night Thoughts.

or wealth can bestow, even the favour and enjoyment of his great and blessed Self.

§ II. Let us consider some *instances* wherein the Tradesmen is called to the exercise of this virtue of contentment. And,

1st, In cheerfully undergoing the *inconveniences and difficulties* of his calling. There are some inconveniences in a trading life in general; and indeed no condition in life is free from them. One is, that the Tradesman is subject to a *dependence upon many persons*. If it is a mechanic business, it usually depends on many *masters*; if it consists in commerce, on many *workmen*, and many *customers*; some fantastical, some penurious or impetuous, others inconstant or idle: Which are real exercises of patience to those employed in trade. — Another inconvenience the Tradesman often meets with, is *bad servants*: These are idle, careless, unfaithful or vicious. No sooner is his back turned, but his business is neglected, his customers slighted, or his goods embezzled, and he loses more at home, than with all his care he can get abroad. — And then, the Tradesman's business usually lies among *all sorts* of men, from whom he meets with disappointment and falshood in some, treachery and fraud in others. — Besides these, there are *particular inconveniences* that relate to several employments; some of which require hard labour; others continual care; sometimes being overdone with business, at other times having nothing to do. These things meeting with a *discontented* spirit, make it inwardly to broil, or outwardly to flame: And the man cries out, who would lead such a life? Never was man thus perplexed; this vexation is never to be endured; no man was ever such a slave; and the like: And seeing he cannot reform others, he

torments himself, and can take no rest, and expatiates largely on the miseries of a trade.

But who art thou, O man, that thou shouldst think to be exempted from the *common lot* of mankind? Canst thou expect that a *new world* should be created to give thee satisfaction? Or that the tempers and manners of men should be changed, from what they *always were*? Why should we think to find men *without* infirmities, who are conscious of so many *in ourselves*? Or hope to ride through the storms of life, without being *tossed* by its waves? Does it not better become us to *possess our souls in patience*, and resolve, that as we cannot make others better, we will be watchful that they do not make us worse, and increase the unavoidable difficulties of life, by fretfulness and impatience; to consider ourselves, as placed by divine providence, in this theatre of action, to *exercise* our wisdom, patience and humility, in order to prepare us for a better state, and make the enjoyment of it more delightful to us.

2. Let contentment be shewn in a *thankful acknowledgment of the several advantages* of your callings: For God hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him; that is, no just cause to complain of his proceedings. The Tradesman's calling, is usually more *comfortable for the body*, than that of many others: You have, for the most part, less toil than the husbandman, and less danger than the seaman or the soldier; and are not exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, and other inconveniences which many undergo, to support yourselves and families. You are seldom kept from sleep by the aches of your bones in daily labour; nor will you be content with the fare and apparel

apparel of the poor labourer : You know best how it is *within*, but one may easily perceive by your *outward* appearance, that you have every way the advantage ; and therefore should be *contented* and *thankful*.—And then, your calling is more *friendly to the mind*. You have usually a more liberal education, than labouring persons ; and are fixed early in life in families, and among persons where you have opportunities to cultivate and improve your *understanding*. In many trades there is time and leisure, wherein by reading and conversation, you may gain that wisdom and knowledge, which may *adorn* your minds, and capacitate you for more *extensive usefulness, pleasure* and *happiness*.—You have generally greater advantages for your *eternal interests* than others. You are often placed where the word of God is preached ; the sacred scriptures, and other books of instruction put into your hands ; the examples of religion and virtue before your eyes ; and every help afforded you that can be desired, for the making you wiser and better. Whereas the situations of many others are *very distant* from the means of knowledge, and *very unfriendly* to the aids of religion, either as to hearing or converse.—And, for *temporal advantages*, yours far exceeds the common lot of multitudes. If God is pleased to add his blessing to your diligence, you *enjoy more* of the comforts of life, and are capable of making *better provision* for your families when you die and leave them. If others can procure plain food and cloathing, and a place to cover their heads ; if they can teach their children to read and write, and then advance them to some of *your services*, it is the highest of their ambition — And lastly, the *Tradesman* has often greater opportunities of *doing good* than many others ;

others; which is man's greatest honour and happiness, next to the beatific vision. You have the opportunity to *educate* and *instruct* those youths that are under your charge; and by counsel and example, to direct them in the paths of religion and virtue; whereby those principles and habits may be implanted in them, (through the grace of God) which may make them happy in future life, and blessings to all around them. In divers trades, many *poor are employed*; whose loins, by mercy and goodness, you may cause to bless you: And, if God prospers your undertakings, you are capable of considerable service to the great *interests of religion*, and the *good of the community* to which you relate: And it must be said in honour to the *trading world*, that most of the noblest charities now existing, owe their foundations, or their continuance, to the benevolence of this useful and important part of mankind.

But then, the *Tradesman* should also consider with *thankfulness*, the advantages of *his own* particular calling; for every calling has advantages, as well as inconveniences, peculiar to itself. If it be laborious, it is usually more free from *cares*, and less subject to *losses*? If it consists in commerce, or buying or selling only, you have commonly *more time*, and *less toil*? If it is hazardous, it is generally *more gainful* than others? In some callings, you become acquainted with the beauties of *nature*; in others, with the curiosities of *art*. These and the like advantages, should be *observed* by the *Tradesman*, and then he will conclude, "I am very happily situated, if I did but know it; and instead of envying the condition of others, or repining at my own, I only need
" a more thankful spirit for the blessings I enjoy."

3d, Let *contentment* be exercised, by a *cheerful patience under losses and disappointments* in trade. Here the Tradesman often finds employment for all his patience and virtue. Sometimes his losses are great, by the *corruptible nature* of the goods he deals in: At other times, chapmen and correspondents *fail*; or storms and tempests make *great devastations* in his substance; and it is not little that many suffer, by the *frequent changes* of the fashions. These, and the like occurrences, fill the *discontented* mind with uneasiness and confusion; the man falls out with his business; condemns all mankind, because some are dishonest; and, I fear, too often frets at divine providence, if he is not ready to deny it, because it does not favour his designs; and thus, he neither enjoys the comfort, nor gives to God the praise of what he possesses, because he has not all that he desired.

But christian *contentment*, though it is not insensible of losses, labours to *digest* them; and if things are bad, will not make them worse by *despondency*, or the neglect of *proper duty*: The good man knows, that constant happiness is no where to be found but in God, and the testimony of a good conscience; and is sensible that afflictive providences, as well as prosperous ones, flow from the *wisdom and goodness* of his heavenly Father; and that the more humble and submissive he lies under his losses, the *sooner* they are likely to be made up to him. Though he suffers by the breaking of others, yet he is thankful to God that *he himself* is not the bankrupt; and is ready, if he finds no treachery in the case, to *compassionate* those who labour under that affliction.

4th, *Contentment* is to be employed in *watching* against those vices which are contrary to it. Among which are these,

1. *Ambition*; which is for aiming at things out of the Tradesman's sphere, making him restless and uneasy in his present condition, because his mind is too high for his calling, or his success unequal to his desires; and the shoe is uneasy, because the foot is swelled: This distemper ruined our first parents, and has been of fatal consequence to many of their posterity: Many a Tradesman by a foolish ambition, has engaged in enterprizes which have deprived him of the comfortable subsistence he before enjoyed. Persons, indeed, may allowably endeavour to raise themselves, as far as the fiber improvement of their time and capacities will admit of, but those desires and pursuits are certainly criminal, which render them *discontented* and *unthankful* for their present enjoyments; which *obstruct* the love and duty they owe to God, and their neighbour; and have only the motives of *pride* and *fancy*, instead of the desires of benevolence and charity for their foundation.

2. *Envy*; when men indulge an *envious* disposition at the prosperity of others. There is one, says *discontent*, less deserving than I, in more credit; another less diligent, but more successful: there are others, who live without care or pains, and yet riches flow in upon them, and they have all that heart can wish: Sure the world is very unequally divided, that we must have labour and disappointment, and they wealth and ease. See, says *envy*, what a fine house, what rich furniture, what a flowing trade, and the like, such and such enjoy. And what is all this to thee? "Is thine eye evil, because God is good?" A little more modesty would teach you, that the Governor of

the universe, knows best where to bestow his gifts; alas! He sees that thy neighbour's high estate, and thy high spirit would undo thee: He knows what is fittest both for him and thee, and therefore be content to be at His disposal. The necessities of this, and hopes of a better life, is happiness enough for you, if you are interested in the favour of the God of heaven; but it is too much, if you are disobedient subjects to God; wherefore you have more than *you deserve*, repine not at what *others possess*.—But as to those you *envy*, you know not the burdens they feel; you see their *seeming* happiness, but not their *real* misery; and are little sensible of the *cares*, and fears, and sorrows, which are the attendants upon a splendid state; as well as the powerful temptations to pride, sensuality, and forgetfulness of God, which their prosperous condition exposes them to: So that they are rather the objects of your compassion, than of your emulation. “Be not, *therefore*, disturbed when one is made rich, when “the glory of his house is increased (*a*).” For he that rejoices at the prosperity of others, makes it *his own*: but he that envies it, deprives himself of the comfort of what *he possesses*.

3. *Covetousness* is another vice, repugnant to contentment. By covetousness, I mean an *insatiable desire of riches*; when men will be rich, or else think they cannot be happy: This restless desire, when it is indulged in the Tradesman's heart, perpetually torments him; and he can enjoy no satisfaction in what he *hath*, through his eager desire after *more*: This causes him to fret at every little loss, and fills him with anguish at every disappointment; he denies himself conveniences, cuts short his family of necessities, neglects

neglects the poor, and destroys his soul, to get money; and his desires of wealth are like the thirst of a fever, the more he *drinks*, the more he *longs*. But how unbecoming is this of a reasonable creature? Riches neither make men more wise, happy, or good; and are no further desirable, than they are procured with a good conscience, and employed to good purposes: And is beneficence and charity, the real end of your desires after them? Judge of your sincerity herein, by the use you make of your *present* acquisitions; for *he that is unfaithful in a little, will be unfaithful also in much*, and no man can be a good steward of many talents, who does not wisely employ a few: If you dare not trust God in a charitable and pious use of what you possess, the pride and pleasures of life, or the increasing love of money, will render you as fruitless of good works in larger acquisitions of wealth.—I know men aim at *satisfaction*, but this is not to be obtained by enlarging their estates, but by contracting their desires; for “he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase (b).” And the word of truth, as well as constant experience, assure us, that “the happiness of man’s life, does not consist in the abundance which he possesses (c).” Therefore, “if riches increase, set not your heart upon them;” or if they decrease, break not your heart for them; but rather imitate the example of the good man, who said, “I take God to witness to my conscience, I desire of God, to myself, no more in this world, than that without which I cannot keep His laws.”

4. *Despondency and dejection of mind*, is another evil contrary to contentment. This commonly

G 2

seizes

(b) Eccles. v. 10.

(c) Luke xii. 15.

seizes the Tradesman when *business is dead*: He furnishes his shop with goods, but finds few customers: He seeks and waits for trade, but little comes. Others with pains and cost prepare their work, but know not where or how to dispose of it: Debts are contracted, but little comes in to discharge them; the necessary expences of their houses and families, are constant and unavoidable; and sometimes his future prospects are more formidable than his present discouragements; and he sees not that either care or industry can relieve him: These things sink the Tradesman's spirits, and he is ready to give up *all hopes*, and put an end to all endeavours to mend his condition.—Amidst these fears and gloomy apprehensions, let the religious Tradesman resolutely persevere in diligence, frugality, and every necessary self-denial, let him use every expedient which prudence may suggest, and conscience approve; and in this course let him strengthen his mind by a steady trust in the divine promises and providence; and assuredly believe, that all things are ordered by God in perfect wisdom and goodness; who *will never leave nor forsake* those that fear and trust in Him: And though he sometimes brings good men low, to *humble* and to *prove them*, and teach them their dependence upon Him, yet it is always with a design of *doing them good* in the latter end. The fountain of being and happiness, can easily make up in spiritual blessings, the absence of any temporal good; and in the most proper time and way, supply your needs, and exceed your desires. Rouse up therefore your fainting spirits, attend still upon your callings, and ease your minds of anxiety and care, by a confirmed trust in God. “They
 “ that know thy name, will put their trust in
 “ thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them
 “ that

“ that seek thee (d).” “ Therefore, take no
 “ thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or
 “ what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body,
 “ what ye shall put on.—Behold the fowls of the
 “ air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor
 “ gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father
 “ feedeth them. Are ye not much better than
 “ they? &c. (e)”

5. Lastly, *Involving others callings* is contrary to this contentment. Diligence and contentment are no enemies to each other; but when persons endeavour to grasp at all the business in their own callings, or to invade those of others, merely to increase their riches; it is too plain an indication of a covetous disposition.—In some cases, indeed, it may be allowable for one person to engage in two or three callings; but then a *just necessity*, and not an avaritious desire of wealth, must oblige you to it: In some cases and situations, one trade not being sufficient for a comfortable subsistence.—Then, they must not be *inconsistent with* each other: If the one hinder the other, or both together disturb and hinder you from other indispensable duties, to God or man, they are to be esteemed and avoided as snares.—And further, you may not follow them to the *prejudice of the common good*: For we are not so to love ourselves, as to exclude all regard to others. Other families may be supported by the trade which you can live well enough without; and the wise and good God, who is the common parent of mankind, will be far from approving such selfish and uncharitable enterprizes. In like manner also, you should be careful of invading *any thing else*, that is proper to your neighbour: If his *house* or *shop* be ever so convenient or advantageous to you, you should neither desire nor endeavour

G 3

deavour

(d) Psal ix 10.

(e) Matt. vi. 25—34.

deavour to procure them to yourself, to his prejudice; nor use any method in order thereto, which you would think unreasonable if the case was your own; but govern yourself by *equity* and *charity*, in every part of your conduct toward others.

5th, *A steady continuance in our callings*, under the several disadvantages of them, is another branch of the *Tradesman's Contentment*. There are many who when they meet with some considerable check in their business, or when indolence prevails upon them, are in haste to leave their callings, and engage in some other; and there are others, who are prompted to it by an unstable disposition of mind, which never suffers them to be at rest in any situation of life: But though we may form pleasing chimeras of the advantages attending other employments than our own; yet it will usually be found, that if the calling wherein we have been *educated*, and with which we are *best acquainted*, will not answer our desires, we are not likely to meet with better success in those employments, the nature and difficulties of which we are *strangers* unto: And therefore, persons should be very cautious how they undertake a change of this kind; and see that they have a proper knowledge of the nature of their new employment, and suitable abilities for conducting it, as well as a reasonable prospect of advantage from it. As to each of which, it will be proper to take the opinion of wise and experienced friends.

The inconveniences arising from the change of a *trade*, often attend the change of *place* or *situation* for carrying it on; a desire of which, many times proceeds from the like unsteady, discontented temper with it; to the former, but especially to this latter circumstance, that observation of the wisest man may be applied; “ as the bird that wandereth
“ from

“ from her nest, so is the man that wandereth
 “ from his place (*f*):” And persons of *Reuben's*
 character generally meet with his fate; “ Unstable
 “ as water, he shall not excel (*g*).”

§ III. Permit me to *enforce the necessity* and *propriety* of this amiable and happy disposition of *contentment*, by observing that,

1st, The *command of God* obliges us to it.
 “ Let your conversation be without covetousness,
 “ and be content with such things as ye have;
 “ for he hath said, I will never leave nor forsake
 “ you (*b*).” Than which, no precept can be
 more *plain*, nor any reason more *powerful*. Ob-
 serve, He says, “ be content with such things as
 “ ye have;” it is not what *others* have, that is to
 be your standard; their steps may be attended
 with more prosperity, and they may be better
 fitted to bear it.—Nor are they such things as ye
have had, that are to produce this *contented* disposi-
 tion; you may have lived higher, and fared better,
 when younger in life; before the fire consumed
 your substance, or marriage multiplied your fa-
 mily, and the like: But be content with such
 things as ye *now* have.—Nor is a satisfied mind to
 be suspended until you acquire such things as you
would have; say not, had I more trade, less fa-
 mily expences, a better house, or fewer losses, &c.
 I should be content; for there is no virtue in being
 pleased when every thing is to our minds; but
 be easy, chearful, and thankful in your *present*
 condition; and consider yourself as placed therein
 by divine providence; who may have services for
 you to do, and blessings for you to receive in
 that situation, which you know not of: It is
 God that “ chuses our inheritance for us (*i*).”

G 4

And

(*f*) Prov. xxvii. 8. (*g*) Gen. xlix. 4.

(*b*) Heb. xiii. 5. (*i*) Psal. xlvii. 4.

And when He hath chosen it, shall we enter our dissent, question His goodness, or censure His wisdom?

2d, *Discontent* contradicts the *providential will* of God, and *your own prayers*; and is *evil in its causes and effects*. The blessed God is the Lord of the universe, and the absolute disposer of all persons and things; and we may be assured from the infinite rectitude, wisdom, and goodness of His nature, that none of His dispensations can vary from these amiable perfections, however they may contradict our foolish desires and expectations: And is it reasonable to expect that He should alter the *laws of nature*, and the *designs of His providence*, to satisfy the weak, short-sighted wishes of every worm? That which is hurtful to me, may be beneficial to many others; the wind that dashes my ship against the rock, may, at the same time, blow two others from off the sands, and what cause have I then to murmur?—Do we not confute our *own prayers*, when we say, “Father, thy will be done,” and yet repine when He does His will upon us? It either shews our hypocrisy, in praying for what we do not desire; or our folly, in contradicting our own requests.

Many other *evils* attend a *discontented* mind, which should deter us from it. It is evil in its *causes*; as it proceeds from pride of heart, envy, covetousness, distrust of God, and an unthankful spirit for the blessings we enjoy. It is evil in its *effects*; it unfits us for the duties and pleasures of a religious life: The discontented person is wholly indisposed for love and delight in God, for praise and gratitude to Him. It *deforms* and *disturbs* our own souls; like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, we gall ourselves the more by struggling against the burden, and deprive ourselves of the
true

true enjoyment of the blessings we possess, by repining at the absence of those we desire ; and often make our “ troubles longer (*k*), by preventing those blessings which an humble patient disposition, would incline our heavenly father to bestow upon us.

3d, If you are *christians in truth*, you have enough to shame all *discontent*. You have the perfections of **GOD** ; the unsearchable riches of Christ ; the influences of the holy Spirit of God ; an interest in the promises of the gospel ; the divine image on your own souls ; the infallible assurance of all needful good here ; and the hope and prospect of consummate blessedness in the life to come, to be your portion and happiness : And if these are not sufficient to *content* you, I must say that you *shamefully* undervalue your high privileges. “ Bear thy condition quietly, “ know that thou art a *man*,” says the heathen philosopher ; with much more propriety may I say, be contented with thy state, know that thou art a *christian*. Thou professest to live by *faith*, do not act below *reason*.

4th, There is *no condition of life*, how low and mean soever, but in the faithful discharge of the duties of religion **GOD** may be *honoured* in it, and by it. Your prudence and piety, your patience diligence and integrity, may recommend religion, not only to your equals, but to persons in superior stations of life ; and those acts of liberality, however small in their kind, that proceed from a heart so full of generous benevolence, animated with piety, that a man is willing to deny himself of many innocent gratifications that he may be able to perform them, is *more regarded* (*l*) by the judges of all, than larger donations from the superstitious.

G 5

cf

(*k*) Numb. xiv. 27—33. (*l*) Luke ii. 1.

of the rich.—And it should be considered for the consolation of the poor, that the *lowest* employments are as necessary for the benefit and comfort of mankind, as those that have a *more splendid* appearance ; as in a well composed building, not the beams and pillars only, but the very pins are necessary to its beauty and strength : Common mechanic trades, often contribute more to the well-being of a state, than more polite and genteel employments ; these often, at best, only serve to the ornament of it, the others are necessary to its subsistence. Let this consideration, especially in comparison with the others, make those content, whom providence has placed in the lowest situations of life.

§ IV. In order to which happy disposition,

1. *Impress upon your minds the reality and importance of a future state.* The man that considers himself only as a short probationer here, for an eternal existence ; and is conflicting with enemies without, and enemies within, for the life of his soul ; will see the absurdity of a solicitude for trifles : Look into the state of your own souls, and you will find so much mercy wanting *for* them ; and so much rectitude and goodness wanting *in* them, as will quench your thirst after other things : How deep is the infatuation of sinful man ! that he can be so perpetually and anxiously solicitous about momentary and empty vanities ; while the image of God is lost in his soul ; and the anger of God is ready to consume him ; and his eternal, unchangeable state depends on the brittle thread of human life, which death may snap in sunder the next hour or moment ?

2. *Get an humble spirit, if you would have a contented one.* Pride causes men to be unthankful for their mercies, and impatient under their crosses ;
but

but afflictions are easily borne, and benefits are ever gratefully acknowledged, by the mind that is truly humble under a sense of its defects. I have a poor trade, and mean fare, it is true, says humility; but it is more than I deserve: I might be begging, or starving, or pining away in pain and misery: There are others, indeed, who enjoy more, but then I suppose they deserve better; however I am sure I merit nothing, and so may well be contented with a little.

3. *Refrain your fancies, and moderate your desires*, if ever you would attain to this happy state of contentment. "Nature and grace are contented with little, but pride and humour with nothing." Mens *real* wants are few, and soon supplied; but if our fancies and desires are made the measure of our necessities, we shall find no end of our *imaginary* wants. The only way to happiness is to bring our mind to our condition, which is in every one's power, by divine assistance; whereas the raising our condition to our mind, is what few can attain; and we find that when men have arrived to that state, in which they thought happiness consisted, their minds swell as their wealth increases, and they are as far from contentment as ever: So that if our circumstances are moderate, we may as well sit down easy and cheerful now as then.

4. Lastly, *Live in dependence upon the blessed God, and place your happiness in his favour*; and then you will easily be contented with what the world affords. The soul that lives with God, and centers in Him as its felicity, enjoys delights so noble and excellent, that it looks with pity on the deluded world, who are pursuing the empty shadows of earthly happiness, and neglecting the only true substantial good, of a reasonable

mortal spirit. He that knows that God is *his*, and that all the perfections of God are engaged *for his good*, will be very easy and satisfied in every state of life.—Learn, therefore, to be *content* with His allowance, to acquiesce in His providence; believe Him to be both wise and good, to know what is best for you, and willing to bestow it upon you, if you are careful to please him: He that hath promised glory and happiness in the *end* to those that love and fear Him; will not deny them any real necessary good, in the *way* to it. Live then upon His infallible word and promises, under all discouragements; and you will certainly find that your hope will not make you ashamed.

“ Then Job said, *naked* come I out of my
 “ mother’s womb, and *naked* shall I return thither: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath
 “ taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,
 “ Job i. 20, 21.

“ Job said, what shall we receive good at the
 “ hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil
 “ also? Job ii. 10.

“ Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for
 “ Him; *fret not thyself* because of him who prof-
 “ pereth in his way, because of the man who
 “ bringeth wicked devices to pass.—*Refrain* from
 “ anger and forsake wrath; *fret not thyself* in
 “ any wise to do evil.—For evil doers shall be
 “ cut off: But those that wait upon the Lord,
 “ they shall inherit the earth.—A little that a
 “ righteous man hath, is *better* than the riches
 “ of many wicked, Psal. xxxvii. 7—9, 16.

“ They tempted God in their heart, by ask-
 “ ing meat for their *lust*.—Yea, they spake a-
 “ gainst God: They said, *Can* God furnish a
 “ table in the wilderness?—*Can* He give bread
 “ also?

“ also; *Can He* provide flesh for His people?—
 “ Therefore the Lord was wroth, and a fire was
 “ kindled against Jacob.— Because they believed
 “ not in God, and trusted not in His salvation,
 “ *Psal.* lxxv. ii. 18—22

“ Better is a little with the fear of the Lord,
 “ than great treasure, and *trouble* therewith, *Prov.*
 “ xv. 16.

“ Two things have I required of Thee, deny
 “ me not before I die.—Remove far from me va-
 “ nity and lying: give me neither *poverty* nor
 “ *riches*, feed me with food convenient for me,
 “ *Eccl.* Prov. xxx. 7—9

“ Better is the light of the eyes, than the
 “ *wandering* of the desire: This is also vanity
 “ and vexation of spirit.—See there be many
 “ things that increase *vanity*, what is man the
 “ better (*for them*)? *Eccles.* vi. 9, 10.

“ I form the light, and create darkness: I
 “ make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all
 “ these things.—Wo unto him that *striveth with*
 “ his Maker: Shall the clay say unto him
 “ that fashioned it, what makest thou? *Ija.*
 “ xlv. 7, 9.

“ He said unto them take heed and beware of
 “ *covetousness*; for a man's life consisteth not in
 “ the abundance of the things that he possesseth
 “ *Eccl.*—Consider the ravens; for they neither sow
 “ nor reap; which have neither store-house nor
 “ barn; yet God feedeth them: How much are
 “ ye *better than* the fowls? *Eccl.* Luke xii. 15. —
 “ 31.

“ I have learned in whatsoever state I am
 “ therewith to be *content*, *Phil.* iv. 11.

“ Godliness with *contentment*, is great gain.—
 “ For we brought nothing into this world, and
 “ it is certain we can carry nothing out.—And
 “ having

“ having *food* and *raiment*, let us be therewith
 “ content — But they that *will be rich*, fall into
 “ temptation, and a snare, and into many fool-
 “ ish and hurtful lulls, which *draw* men in de-
 “ struction and perdition. — For the *love of money*,
 “ is the root of all evil ; which while some *coveted*
 “ after, they have been seduced from the faith,
 “ and pierced themselves through with many sor-
 “ rows. — But thou, O man of God, flee these
 “ things, 1 Tim. vi. 6—11.”

C H A P. VIII.

Of Religion.

§ I. *A brief description of Religion as it re-
 spects God. — The necessity of a renovation
 of mind in order to it. — § II. Some in-
 stances, wherein it is to be exercised. —*
 1. *In the operative knowledge of the per-
 fections of God, and his relation to us. —*
 2. *In adhering to the word of God, as the
 rule of our faith and practice. — 3. In
 living by faith on God in every state of
 life. — 4. In the serious and constant wor-
 ship of God. — 5. In the religious observ-
 ance of the Lord's-day. — 6. In useful and
 serious conversation. — 7. In pious medita-
 tion and reflection. — 8. In vigilance and
 watchfulness against temptations. — § III.
*An enquiry into our own conformity to these
 rules.**

rules.—§ IV. An attempt to remove some prejudices to a religious life.—§ V. The singular advantages and necessity of religion.—Scriptures suited to the subject.

§ I. I Do not here intend to describe *Religion* in its full extent; for so it includes all the duties already specified, as *prudence, diligence, justice, integrity of speech, contentment, &c.*; but chiefly to consider it as it respects our behaviour to God. Religion, in this sense, consists in having just apprehensions of him, and *minds and practices formed agreeable thereto*; it is often pointed out to us in the sacred scriptures, by some operative principle, which has a general influence upon our tempers and lives; as the “fear of God (a);” “the love of God (b);” “the knowledge of God (c);” “walking before God (d);” “uprightness of heart (e);” “being spiritually minded (f);” and the like.

But alas for us, these are principles not natural to man: His mind is *darkened* by ignorance; his affections are enstranged from God and goodness; all his powers and faculties are impaired and perverted by sin; and the original rectitude of his nature is contradicted by sensual and evil appetites and affections. Such is the depravity of the human mind, that, when *religion* takes place in it men are said to be “born again (g);” to be made “new creatures (h);” to be “created again in Christ Jesus unto good works (i);”

“and

(a) Psal xxxiv. 7, 9, 11. Eccles. viii. 12.

(b) Rom. viii. 28. (c) Dan vii. 32. (d) Gen. xviii. 15.

(e) Psal lxiv. 10. (f) Rom. viii. 6.

(g) John iii. 7. (h) Gal. vi. 15. (i) Eph. ii. 10.

“and renewed in the spirit of their minds (k).” Vain is the attempt to heal this or that folly of the mind, or irregularity of the life, until the *corrupt fountain* of a vicious heart, from whence they proceed, be purified: The *tree* must first be made good, before the *fruit* can be so (l). Our consciences must be “purged from dead works (m);” and our souls *united to Christ Jesus*, by a true and living faith (n), before we can acceptably serve the living God. “How vain are
 “all our confessions of sin, unless they flow from
 “golly sorrow, and are attended with a sincere
 “faith in the great Redeemer’s intercession, and
 “an unfeigned repentance before God? What
 “are all our praises and thanksgivings to God,
 “unless they proceed from true love to Him,
 “and gratitude for his mercies? What are our
 “prayers and petitions, but mere mockeries of
 “His infinite Majesty, unless they are the true
 “and hearty desire of our souls? And how vain
 “are all pretences to the love and reverence of
 “God, unless they are productive of sincere and
 “universal obedience to His will?” In a word, God’s *work* must be done according to God’s *mind*, if we expect that He should accept it at our hands; and this cannot be without a renewed soul: “The carnal mind is enmity against God,
 “and is not subject to the law of God; neither
 “indeed can be.—So then they that are in the
 “flesh cannot please God (o).”

§ II. The foundation of a *religious* life, being thus laid by *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a *rectitude of heart* towards God, we proceed to consider some instances wherein it is to be exerted. And,

1st,

(k) Eph. iv. 23. (l) Matt. xii. 33. (m) Heb. ix. 14. (n) John xv. 4. (o) Rom. viii. 7.

ist, *In the operative knowledge of the perfections of God, and the relations in which we stand towards Him.* His glorious *perfections* must have some suitable influence upon us. His *Majesty* and *Greatness* must affect us with *humble reverence*, in all our thoughts and speeches of Him, and in all our approaches to Him in religious worship. Trifling, diminutive thoughts of God, the bold and irreverent use of His name; and careless addresses to Him in worship, are affronts to the infinite glory of His nature. If we would serve God acceptably, it must be “with reverence” and godly fear; for our God is a consuming “fire (p)” — His *unfathomable goodness* and *excellence*, claim our warmest *affection*, and highest *delight*; to fix our supreme love on an inferior good, is to slight and undervalue his glorious Majesty, and can only arise from a strange perversion of our judgment. He is not only the greatest good *in Himself*, and the infinite fountain of all that is wise, amiable and good in the universe; but He is the best good *for us*; the only satisfying substantial delight of a reasonable immortal spirit; and therefore demands “to be loved with” all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with “all our strength (q).” His *benefits* too, as well as his *nature*, claim this our supreme affection and love to Him; as He has given us our beings, and all the enjoyments of them, and we continually partake of His goodness, and depend on His benignity. — His *purity* and *holiness*, as they are the foundation of our *veneration* and *esteem*, so they should affect us with an *humbling sense* of our own guilt and depravity, and cause us to fly to the grace and Spirit of our adorable Redeemer, for the *pardon* of our guilt, and the *healing* of our nature; and

(p) Heb. xii. 28.

(q) Matt. xxii. 37.

and never rest, until we attain a nearer resemblance to God in Holiness, that we may be better fitted for the enjoyment of Him.—His *Omniscience* should induce us to *watch over* the inward dispositions and thoughts of our hearts; and deter us from all *dissimulation* and *hypocrisy*, both in the duties of religion, and in our concerns with men; as being continually in the presence, and under the eye of that God, “before whom all things are naked” and open (r).—And, lastly, His *wisdom* and *power*, His *justice* and *truth*, are to be *reverenced* in His threatenings; to be *relied on* in His promises; to be *credited* and *submitted to* in all the declarations of His word, and in every event of His providence.

Likewise His *relations to us*, and ours to Him, must be answered by *suitable* dispositions and behaviour. As *creatures* we are to remember that He is our absolute Lord and Owner; that we are *His*, much more than any thing we possess is *our own*, having only a derived right from Him to all that we enjoy; and therefore, it is our indispensable duty to *yield ourselves to Him*, and use ourselves, and all our capacities *for Him*, as our highest end (s). To pay an universal obedience to His will, render an entire resignation of ourselves to His providence; and, thus, we need not fear but He will preserve and bless us, employ us in delightful and honourable service, and return us to our selves infinitely better than He found us. “Ye are not your own; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s (t).”—As our *Preserver* and *Benefactor*, we should *trust* in His goodness, and *resign* ourselves to His care; *seek to Him* continually, for all the blessings we need;

(r) Heb. iv. 13. (s) Rom. vi. 13 — 19.
(t) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Rom. xiv. 7, 9.

need; retain a grateful sense, and offer Him our thankful acknowledgments, for *all benefits* we receive at His hand; which is also to be expressed by the *love* and *duty* of our hearts and lives: These are duties, which the light of nature confirms our obligations unto; and which all reasonable beings are bound to pay to GOD, as their sovereign Lord and Creator.

But then, as we are *guilty, depraved creatures*, who have, in manifold instances, brought ourselves under the *condemnation* of GOD's holy law, and rendered ourselves odious to His pure and unspotted nature; all hopes of his favour and acceptance would have been cut off, if in infinite goodness and mercy He had not offered Himself to us, in the *new relations* of a REDEEMER, and a SANCTIFIER. This is the great design of the gospel of Christ to propose and confirm to all, who, sensible of their guilt and just demerits, sincerely and cordially embrace Him as their Saviour. By these we are obliged, if we would be safe and happy for time and eternity, to reflect with shame and sorrow upon our disobedience and apostasy from GOD; to "fly for refuge (*u*)" from His just vengeance, to Jesus Christ, as the only *Redeemer* of sinners; *trusting in* His sacrifice and mediation, to procure our acceptance with GOD (*w*); living as His *disciples* in the imitation of His holy life (*x*); attending to His *doctrines*, as the great Teacher and Restorer of mankind (*y*); and obeying His *heavenly precepts*, as the universal Lord and Head of His church (*z*).—In order to this, we must implore the *influences* of the holy Spirit

(*u*) Heb. vi. 18. (*w*) Acts iv. 12. Rom. vi. 23.
 1 Cor. iii. 11. (*x*) 1 John ii. 6. (*y*) Acts iii. 22, 23.
 (*z*) Heb. v. 9. Luke vi. 40.

Spirit of God, to *sanctify* and *renew* our natures, to restore the image of God lost in our souls, and give us the temper and disposition of His children; that we may be fitted for His present service, and future enjoyment. Thus the *practical knowledge* of God, must influence us in the whole frame of our hearts and lives.

2d, *Religion* consists in *adhering to the word of God*, as the rule of our faith and practice. A reverential regard to the *holy scriptures*, and an humble subjection of soul to the sacred contents of them, is an inseparable consequent of true religion. *He that is of God, will hear and reverence God's word (a)*, and be directed by it in every situation and circumstance of life. The more we study it, and the nearer we conform to it, the more wise, reasonable and happy we shall be; and we never depart from the important dictates of it, but ignorance, folly and unhappiness take place. It has ever been an invariable rule, without any exception, that the more any have been influenced by a spirit of *true religion* and *virtue*, the more their *esteem* and *love* to these blessed records have increased; and we may venture to affirm, that the neglect and contempt that is thrown upon the *Bible*, is the nearest cause of all the profaneness and immorality of the present age. This is one instance therefore of the Tradesman's *religion*, not to govern himself by the examples of others, by humour, appetite, or selfish views; but by the *holy word of God*, and such directions as sound reason will deduce from thence. I am apt to believe that very many of the indiscretions and misfortunes of Tradesmen would have been prevented, if they had walked more steadily by this rule. "Bind them *then* continually upon thine
" heart

(a) John viii. 47.

“ heart, and tie them about thy neck.—When
 “ thou goest it shall lead thee ; when thou sleepest
 “ it shall keep thee ; and when thou awakest it
 “ shall talk with thee ;—for the commandment is
 “ a lamp ; and the law is light ; and the reproofs
 “ of instruction are the way of life (b).”

3d, The Tradesman's religion lies in *living by faith* on God, under all the changes and vicissitudes of an inconstant world: This, like an *anchor* *sure* and *self-fast*, will keep the soul quiet and serene in all the storms of life ; enliven the christian's hope, animate his endeavours, and make him easy in every state and condition. “ Thou
 “ wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is
 “ stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee (c).”
 But how contrary to this is the state of every ungodly, earthly mind ? If the world smiles upon him, he idolizes it as his deity ; if it frowns upon him, he despairs and dies. As all his hopes and prospects center here, his comfort and security is as fluctuating as the foundation on which it is built ; *i. e.* temporal prosperity *.—Whereas the good man, though he is not *insensible* of the difference between prosperity and adversity, yet is not anxiously “ afraid of evil tidings, for his heart
 “ is

(b) Prov. vi 21—23.

(c) Isa. xxvi 3.

* Oh how they dream of things impossible ?
 Of joys perpetual, in perpetual change ?
 Of itable pleasures on the tossing wave ?
 Eternal sun-shine in the storms of life ?
 Till at death's toll, or heaven's relentless blast,
 Starting they 'wake, and find themselves undone.
 The spider's most attenuated thread,
 Is cord, is cable to man's tender tie,
 Of earthly bliss ; it breaks at every breeze.

Dr Young.

“ is fixed, trusting in the Lord (d).”—And then, what are all the great concerns of religion without “ *faith* ? which is the evidence of things not seen, “ and the substance of things hoped for.” What influence will the word or worship of God have upon us, heaven or hell, God or Christ, without *faith* ? In a word, we must live by *faith*, and breathe by *prayer*.

4th, The *serious* and *constant worship* of God, is another principal branch of *religion*. The same light of reason and revelation, which manifests to us the *being* of God, proves that it is our indispensable duty to *worship* Him. This is a truth so deeply imprest upon the mind of man, that scarce any of the human species under heaven, except among the degenerate part of those that call themselves *christians*, but in some way or another, pay their adorations to the Deity by worship. This is the *Tradesman's* duty as well as others, for how can he be said to “ abide with God in his calling (e), ” who never comes *near* him ? By meditation and prayer we draw nigh to God, and by His word He speaks to us ; and surely creatures whose happiness for both worlds depends upon God, should not stand in need of arguments to seek continually unto Him ; for “ will not every people seek “ unto their God (f) ? ” But the *Tradesman's* religious *worship* should not be confined to the church or the closet. He has family-wants to be relieved, family-sins to be forgiven, and family-blessings to be thankful for ; *family-worship* therefore is his reasonable and indispensable duty. Accordingly we find those families represented as the subjects of divine vengeance, “ who call not “ upon God's name (g). ” At the fittest time, there-

(d) Psal. cxii. 10. (e) 1 Cor. vii. 24. (f) Isa. viii. 19. (g) Jer. x. 25.

therefore, morning and evening, let your serious addresses be made to heaven, with all your family; let not company or business tempt you to neglect this duty, or to do it *unseasonably*: Remember that the most high God claims your first and highest regard, and that nothing can excuse your *omission* of His worship, but some necessary and greater duty. Say not, you want *time* for it, for men must find time to eat, and sleep, whatever business is left undone; and none of these are more necessary, nor can you be less excusable in the neglect of any of them, than of worship. An hour in twenty-four, may be sufficient for this necessary and advantageous duty; as it is, not the length, but the sincerity of our services, which render them acceptable to God; and it is incredible, that with proper care you cannot secure so much time for such an important affair.—Neither plead that the business of your callings leave you, in the evening, *without strength* or *spirits* for it; for immoderate labour may be as criminal, as immoderate feeding: God requires, and will accept and bless no such eagerness in business, as unfitness men for his service; but, however, let it be remembered that this can be no excuse in the *morning*; your spirits are then fresh and vigorous. It is to be feared, that such pleas as these, are rather the effects of a want of *inclination*, than of *ability*. We should with much more reason say, I have laboured all the day for a little *food* and *raiment*, &c. shall I not exert myself in the evening for the blessings of God's *forgiveness* and *grace*? I have wearied my body for a *living on earth*, shall I not stretch forth my soul for the *eternal crown*? O! let not your diligence and solicitude for the treasures of *this world*, condemn your slothfulness and indolence for *heavenly riches*,
but

but let each have their *due time* and *place* in your hearts and employments.

5th, *The religious observance of the Lord's-day*, is another branch of true religion. This is one of the *first* things which the grace of GOD reforms in the sincere christian; no sooner does he begin to look in earnest towards GOD and heaven, but he values and employs *the holy day* of GOD in a different manner than he did before; and as religion more or less flourishes in the soul, so this *sa-cred time* is ever more or less esteemed and improved. Remember *the sabbath-day*, therefore, *before it comes*, and endeavour to clear your minds of worldly cares and incumbrances, that you may be fit for the noble and divine employments of it; fit to adore and praise the Majesty and Perfections of GOD your Maker; to celebrate and seek the blessings of redeeming love and grace, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord; to hear his most holy word, and receive the instructions of it; to acknowledge with gratitude and joy the mercies you partake of; and with sincere sorrow and contrition, to lament and confess the sins and follies of your hearts and lives; in a word, to obtain and strengthen all those holy tempers and dispositions, as may fit you for a wise, happy, and religious life on earth, and the glories of an everlasting state in the world to come. Let not the *love* or *guilt* of any sin, enter into this *holy day* to defile it, but "wash your hands in innocency, and so compass the altar of GOD (*b*)."
Though cheerfulness and holy joy are especially the duties of this day, yet be careful to abstain from *sensual* pleasures, and not only vile, but *vain* and *fruitless* thoughts and converse. Let no *worldly business* be either con-
trived

trived or done, which might have been done before, or may be deferred till future time, but “ call the sabbath a delight, *as it is* holy to the “ Lord, and honourable; and honour Him “ therein; not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine “ own words (i).” Consider how great the blessing is, that you have leave to approach to GOD, and time to prepare your souls for an eternal state, and improve it accordingly.

Let your *families* also partake of the same advantages: This is one reason why the common employments of life are prohibited on *this day*; that *servants*, as they have souls of equal value with the greatest, may have the means of improvement in knowledge and holiness. “ The seventh “ day is the sabbath of the Lord thy GOD; in it “ thou shalt not do any work: That thy manservant, and thy maid-servant, may rest as well “ as thou (k).” Give them *sufficient time* for the worship of almighty GOD; and let not their souls be starved, for the sake of feasting your *bodies*. Not only *allow* your children and servants time for the religious duties of the day; but *watch over them* to see that they attend upon the same. *Instruct* them in religion and virtue; *encourage* them in what is good, and seriously *reprove* what is amiss in them: You deal worse by them, than you would by your *very cattle*, if you suffer them to go on in the paths which lead to misery and destruction, without doing what in you lies to *prevent* it. Never give them rest, therefore, until you have, with the help of GOD, either cured their ignorance and irreligion, or find them incurable.

H

Remem-

(i) Isa. lviii. 13.

(k) Deut. v. 14. 15.

Remember also, that it is “ the sabbath of the
 “ Lord, in all your dwellings (*l*). And there-
 fore, let Him be *honoured* and *served there*, as well
 as in the places of public worship: Read His
 word with reverence and attention; sing His
 praises with understanding and delight; and seek
 His favour with humility, faith and sincerity;
 that by these *lower services* you may be fitted for
 the *heavenly state*, and carry the *blessing of God*
 into the labours of the ensuing week; for it was
 the observation of a great and good man *, “ that
 “ in long experience he had found, that a due
 “ observation of the duties of the *Lord's day*, had
 “ ever joined with it a blessing upon the rest of
 “ his time, and the week so begun, was pro-
 “ sperous to him; whereas, when he had been
 “ negligent in the duties of this day, the rest of
 “ the week was unsuccessful, and unhappy to his
 “ own secular employments.” And this is far
 from being a singular observation.

6th, An habitual disposedness unto, and practice
 of *religious conversation*, is another material branch
 of the christian's duty. I mean, to employ the
 noble faculty of speech in a manner becoming
 reason and religion. “ The mouth of the righte-
 “ ous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh
 “ of judgment. — The law of God is in his
 “ heart (*m*).” Particularly we should abstain
 from *hurtful* converse; such as *reflects upon* the
 honour of the blessed God, or tends to *lessen*
 men's regard to Him; such as *defiles* and *corrupts*
 the mind; injures the reputation of those that are
absent, or provokes and insults those that are *pre-*
sent, or is merely *idle, empty, and vain*; in a
 word,

(*l*) Lev. xxiii. 3. (*m*) Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31.

* Lord Chief Justice Hale.

word, whatsoever is contrary to the laws of *charity, religion, or chastity*, should be banished from our lips. But then, we must aim at something *useful*, at well as abstain from every thing *hurtful* in our conversation: A negative goodness is no more sufficient in this, than in other parts of the christian character; the tongue of man was given him to be employd to his *Maker's* praise, and to be *useful* and *instructive* to those around him; and angels themselves have not nobler or more delightful subjects for the employment of it than we: "The glorious perfections of God;
 " the amiable Jesus; the holy word of God;
 " His wonderful works of nature, providence,
 " and grace; the happiness of the eternal world
 " before us; the means and helps to our safe arrival there, and hints for it; and the dangers,
 " follies, and snares, that lie in our way, obstruct our progress to it, and possession of it." The e are topics of conversation, the most interesting and delightful; and nothing but the perfection of madness and folly, can inter at their being introduced on all proper occasions; or think that the shifting of the wind; the nature of the weather; the conduct of their neighbours; and a thousand other impertinences, are subjects so well becoming man's rational soul, and immortal nature.

I am sensible, that as we have concerns of a lower nature to regard, while we remain in the present state, they ought to have a *proportionable share* of our thoughts and words; neither is it proper at all times, to *expose* the sacred truths of religion to the contempt of the vile or profane. But that *religious converse* should be banished from the lips of those that call themselves *men* and *christians*, as melancholy, mean or improper; is as

absurd as to say, that the world is better than God, or money than heaven; and the pleasures of appetite and animal sense, better than grace and glory; and the sneers of a fool, worse than hell or sin.

7th, *Pious meditation*, is another branch of true religion. Much of the temper of our minds may be discerned by the currency of our *thoughts*: In the covetous, these run out with the greatest constancy and delight after gain and riches: In the voluptuous, various sensitive pleasures and gratifications, employ them: Honour and applause engross the thoughts of the ambitious; but as the hopes and happiness of the sincere christian center in God and his favour, he cannot but employ his frequent, serious *thoughts* about the securing and enjoyment of it; for this is one of his intallible dictates who formed the spirit of man, and knows all the operations of it, that "where the treasure is, there the heart will be also (n)." While the *hands* of the pious Tradesman are employed in the common business of life, his *heart* will be aspiring to God, and delighting itself in His perfections, word and works. As no ship is so laden but it will contain many jewels more, so no business can so constantly fill up your minds, as not to allow of serious intervening thoughts.—There is no need to retire to a *cloyster*, in order to preserve a religious disposition of mind, or lead a virtuous life.

But our *meditations* should be considered as the means to a *further end*; namely, to *influence* and *affect* our souls; we should be musing until the fire burns: For which purpose, we should choose those subjects that are *most powerful* and *operative*: Great and important truths, as they are usually the

(n) Mat. vi. 21.

the surest, and least controverted, so they most effectually impress the mind, and leave an happy influence upon it. Among which are, the *perfections* of God; His wonderful *love* and *goodness*, as revealed in Jesus Christ; the awful solemnities of a *future* judgment: The importance and certainty of an *eternal* state of existence; the shortness and instability of *time*, and all the *enjoyments* of it: These are included in those mentioned before, which if attended to, would, by the grace of God, produce a religious temper of mind, and an holy life.

Sometimes we may turn our *meditations* into *ejaculatory* prayers and addresses to heaven: Such as that of *Nehemiah*. "Remember me, O my God, for good (o);" or of the royal Psalmist; "Lord, I am thine, save me (p);" and the like. These, when you feel the guilt of *sin* to press you, or the sense of *mercy* to affect you, or any *danger* or *difficulty* to affright you; will be a present relief to your spirits, until the more stated time for devotion returns.—Sometimes our *thoughts* may be well employed by way of *soliloquy*, or conversing with ourselves: Either rousing up our slothful spirits, or comforting our drooping souls, or pleading with our own hearts by convincing reasons; these methods pious men have often taken to good purpose: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, says the Psalmist; why art thou disquieted within me?" Having thus reproved his unreasonable fears, his faith revives, and he says, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him; who is the health of my countenance, and my God (q)."

H 3

Lastly,

(o) Nehem. xiii. 31.
xliii. 5.

(p) Psal. cxix. (q) Psal.

Lastly, Great variety of useful *reflections* may be drawn from the common *occurrences* of life, and the variety *objects* which present themselves to our view. Thus the sudden *death* of others, may quicken us in preparing for our own, and shew us the vanity of earthly pursuit. The sight of the *deformed* and *miserable*, may teach us an useful lesson of gratitude to God for his greater goodness to us. The manifold dangers, and excessive labours which others undergo for *trifling* advantages; may shew us out of negligence in our pursuit of *heaven* and *happiness*: And indeed, there is scarce any thing but a serious mind may *improve* to its great advantage. This, no doubt, was the design of the frequent *similies* and *parables* of the word of God, that we might be taught instruction from sensible objects: Thus we are sent to the *ant* (r) to learn sagacity and diligence: to the *potter* (s) for submission to the will of God; to the *refiner* (t) for consolation and instruction under affliction. And our blessed Saviour's gospel is filled with *emblems*, for the same purposes: Among which are, the *Vine*, the *Fig-tree*, the *Pearl of great price*, the *importunate Widow*, and *prodigal Son*. Easy would be the task, and great the advantage, if the religious Tradesman would thus, like the industrious bee, gather honey from every flower. Surely, the consideration is sad, that christians should know how to converse with men, and sometimes with God himself, and yet be at a loss to commune with their *own hearts*.

8th, The practice of *Religion* necessarily includes *watchfulness*. Wherever the love and fear of God is in sincerity, there will be a constant concern to please Him; and this can never be attained

(r) Prov. vi. 8. (s) Jer. viii. 7. (t) Zech. xiii. 9.

attained by beings whose natures are imperfect, and appetites and passions strong and irregular, amidst surrounding sollicitations to evil from an insinuating world, and vigilant spiritual adversaries unless we *watch*, as well as pray against every temptation. — This *watchfulness* the christian should especially maintain against the *particular sins* to which his calling, situation and constitution, expose him. The sure sign of *uprightness of heart*, consists in keeping ourselves “from our own iniquity (u);” that which our dispositions most *incline* us unto; which we find most *difficult* to resist, and hardest to overcome; for which conscience most *frequently* reproves us, and we condemn ourselves when under *affliction*, or in the apprehensions of *death*.

But the vices which human nature are most prone unto, are *covetousness* and *sensuality*; the *Tradesman* therefore should be peculiarly *watchful* against them. They are the root of all evils; they *estrangle* the heart from, and *deadens* the affections to God and Goodness; they *sensualize* the very souls of men, and give such a *criminal bias* to their appetites and inclinations, as produces forgetfulness and contempt of God, a disrelish to the purity and spirituality of His laws and worship, the neglect of their immortal souls, and the concerns of another world; they *cloud* the understanding, *pervert* the judgment, *extinguish* the principles of religion, justice, truth and benevolence, in the hearts of men, and *debase* their natures to a resemblance of the beasts that perish: In a word, the prevalence of them is every where in scripture, represented as absolutely inconsistent

H 4

with

(u) Psal. xviii. 23.

with the *christian life*, and destructive of our *heavenly hopes*. "This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (w)." "They that are after the flesh: do mind the things of the flesh: But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.—For to be carnally minded is death.—Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.—So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.—For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, &c (x)." *and*

§ III. Having thus considered some instances of a *religious temper and life*, let us *reflect upon ourselves*, and consider what *our own dispositions and practice* has been. Have we ever experienced such a *renovation of mind*, as has given us a prevailing bias of soul towards God and Christ, heaven and holiness? Or are we *the same* self-righteous, sensual, dead and dissipated beings to God and goodness, that ever we were?—Have the glorious *perfections* of the adoreable God, and the relations in which we stand unto Him, had an habitual practical influence upon our tempers and our lives? Or have we forgotten God that formed us; neglected to glorify that supream and transcendent Being in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways; and lightly esteemed the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of our Salvation? Have we studied and revered the *holy word* of God, and made that the rule and guide of our lives? or have we made the customs and examples of an evil world, or our own selfish interests

(w) Eph. v. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Psal. x. 3.

(x) Rom. vii. 5—13. 1 John ii. 15, 16.

and humours, the rule of all our conduct?—Have we *lived by faith* on God, for all the supports and supplies of life? Or “have we made gold our hope, and said to fine gold thou art our confidence?”—Has the *worship* of the Almighty been performed with seriousness, faith, and constancy, in our families and retirements? or have we lived as without God in the world, and cast off His fear, by restraining prayer before Him?—Have we honoured, revered, and delighted in the *sabbaths* of the Lord? or have they been esteemed a weariness unto us, and the time thought long, wherein we were detained from the common business and pleasures of the world? Have we *set a watch* before the door of our lips? Has our conversation been sober, rational, useful and religious? Have our hearts been frequently aspiring to God, by *serious reflection* and *meditation*, in order to animate and strengthen the life of God in our souls? or has not the vanity and folly of our thoughts and words, been too plain an indication that a wise and religious disposition of heart and temper of mind, has been wanting in us?—To conclude; have we been watchful and circumspect in our Christian course; especially against the *predominant sins* of covetousness and sensuality? or have our souls been buried in the earth, or drowned in carnality; and God, Christ, and the eternal world, been forgotten and neglected by us?—These are *questions* we should put close to our consciences, while there is time and space for repentance; before we are called to the presence of God, from whose judgment there is no appeal; and whose scrutiny into our hearts and lives, will be more particular and exact, than any we can enter into upon ourselves.

§ IV. I shall endeavour to remove some of those *prejudices* which arise in the minds of men against a *religious* life.

One is, the *difficulties of religion*; that the rules of it are too self-denying, and the path to heaven too narrow to be comfortable and happy. — To this it may be replied, that there is nothing which God requires but what is conducive to the *real happiness* of reasonable creatures; and nothing that he forbids but what is consistent with it. The *excessive* indulgence of animal appetites, and disorderly affections, whatever low satisfactions they may give at present, are as destructive of the *true peace*, as they are of the *purity* of the human mind; and are these restrictions of religion then fit subjects of complaint? If our vitiated natures find some of the rules of religion a *restraint* upon our inclinations, can we think that our appetites and affections are always to wide and reachable as never to *need a curb*? Or shall we repent, when we arrive at the regions of bliss, that our labour has been *too much*, or our self-denial *too great*, in order to attain that happy state? Surely not. — But there is really nothing so hard in religion, but the grace of God, and the habits of virtue, will *make it easy* to us; the greatest difficulties are usually at first, before the mind is healed of its prevailing distempers; the longer we travel on in the paths of religion, the more sweet and delightful they become unto us: As all the employments of life appear difficult, when we first enter upon them, why should difficulties in religion *only* affright us? If we believe God, and credit those who have made the experiment, they assure us, that “all its ways are
“plea-

“pleasantness, and its paths peace (y),” and “in keeping of them is great reward (z).”

If it be said, that such *strictness* and *circumspection* is more *ado than needs*. Let such only consult the sacred word of God, by which we are to be judged, and see whether “denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world (a),” is not every where made the *qualification* for enjoying the happiness of the next: And then consider, whether the dark and depraved mind of man, or the declarations of infinite rectitude, wisdom and goodness, are the *fittest* to determine what state of soul is necessary for His own acceptance and enjoyment.

Some perhaps are unwilling to engage in the *christian* course, from an apprehension that it may *expose them to contempt* from others, as being singular and precise. — But what I pray you is there that can merit contempt in the belief, reverence, and love of the God of heaven and earth; in owning your dependence upon Him, and expressing your gratitude to Him, by humble prayer and praise? What in a strict regard to goodness, truth and justice to man, and the government of your appetites and passions? Yet these are the *substance* of religion: It is by these that you are afraid of being made ridiculous; than which, nothing can more ennoble, adorn and bless human nature. It was the observation of one of the wiser heathens “That virtue was so beautiful, that if it could be rendered visible to the eyes of man, every one would be in love with it.” Where religion is *not maimed* and deformed by its professors,

(y) Prov. iii. 17. (z) Psal. xix. (a) Tit. ii. 12.

effors, it commands *reverence* and *respect* from the observers of it. Certain I am, that there is not the most profligate person now on earth, who would not shortly give ten thousand worlds, if such he had, that his own life had been in every respect *as strictly conformed* to the wise and holy will of God, as that of the most diligent observer of the divine precepts. Which then most deserves our regard, the approbation of God, of angels, and of ~~all~~ good men; or the censures of those who will soon condemn themselves, for the neglect of what they now despise? “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels (b).”

§ V. Only let it be further observed, that a life of *serious, practical religion*, is recommended to us by the most *weighty considerations*.

I. It is the *truest wisdom*. He certainly is the *wisest* man, who by serious diligence, and prudent foresight, secures to himself the greatest good, and escapes the greatest evil. As heaven is better than earth, and eternity longer than time, so much *more wise* is he, who by faith in Christ Jesus, and a conformity to the prescribed rules of the gospel, obtains the invaluable blessings of it, than he that gains the greatest earthly good *. If God, the fountain of wisdom,

is

(b) Mark viii. 34, 38.

* Eternity depending on an hour,
Makes serious thought, man's *wisdom*, joy and praise;
Nor need you blush at your design on heaven.

Our

is the proper judge, we have His decision in those words; "Unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding (c)." But how vain is that man's pretences to *wisdom*, how much soever he shines in wealth, wit, or learning, whose mind is estranged from God, and his eternal felicity neglected, for the dreams and shadows of earthly pursuits and enjoyments?

2. A Life of Religion affords the most *solid happiness*. There is nothing so much *enables* and *regulates* the faculties of the soul, and crowns it with *peace* and *tranquillity*, as the faith and fear of God, and a supreme affection to Him; a relation to the Lord Jesus as a Saviour, &c. The *delights* of sincere religion, do as far surpass the pleasures of the covetous, the sensual and voluptuous, as the pleasures of a *man* do those of the *brutes*. If the blessed God is the *most happy* Being, then they that bear the *nearest* resemblance to Him, must necessarily be the *most happy* creatures: They not only enjoy the divine pleasures of a religious life, but have by far the *truest comfort* of those blessings they possess in common with other men. Religion restrains us from no pleasures which are *consistent with* reason, and our truest interest: Nothing can afford so much *support* under the unavoidable afflictions of the present state; and I may venture to affirm, that even the *penitential* sorrows of a good man, have *more true satisfaction* in them, than the greatest delights that the vicious and profane ever enjoyed

3. Lastly,

(c) Job xxviii. 28.

Our schemes to plan by this world, or the next,
Is the sole difference between the *wise* and *fool*;
All worthy men will weigh you in this scale.

Dr YOUNG.

3. Lastly, *True Religion* is of the *greatest necessity*. All other concerns compared with this, are but as the toys of children to the labours of life. This is "the one thing needful," without which, the *end* of man's creation is lost, the *glory* of God in his works is frustrated, and the *whole existence* of reasonable beings in vain. It were infinitely better never to have had *a being*, than leave this world with the guilt of sin *unpardoned*, and the power of it *unsubdued*.—And it is also *necessary* for securing a blessing upon all our temporal concerns. *Godliness* bath the *promise of this life*, as well as *that which is to come* (d). If we *truly* serve God, He will *certainly* bless us. Men may increase their riches by other methods, but "the prosperity of such fools *only tends to destroy them* (e)." And God can easily *blast* the most vigorous endeavours for this life, if we *neglect* the love and duty we owe to Him. The *Tradesman* would do well to consider whether many of his losses and decays may not be the *chastisement* of his neglect of these important concerns.

" This commandment which I command thee
 " this day, is not hidden from thee.—But the
 " word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in
 " thy heart, that thou mayest *do it*.—See, I have
 " set before thee this day *life and good, death and*
 " *evil*.—In that I command thee this day to love
 " the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and
 " to keep his commandments, his statutes, and
 " his judgments, that thou mayest live; and that
 " the Lord thy God may bless thee.—But if thine
 " heart *turn away*, so that thou wilt not hear; I
 " denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely
 " perish.

(d) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

(e) Prov. i.

“ perish.—I call heaven and earth to record this
 “ day against you, that I have set before you life
 “ and death, blessing and cursing: Therefore
 “ *choose life* that thou and thy seed may live, &c.

“ *Deut. xxx. 11—20.*

“ The Lord God of Israel saith, Them that
 “ *honour me*, I will honour, and they that *despise*
 “ me shall be lightly esteemed, *1 Sam. ii. 30.*

“ Only fear the Lord, and *serve him in truth*
 “ with all your heart; for consider how great
 “ things he hath done for you.—But if ye shall
 “ still do *wickedly*, ye shall be consumed. *1 Sam.*
 “ *xii. 24, 25.*

“ Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David
 “ great mercy, according as he walked before thee
 “ in *truth* and in *righteousness*, and in *uprightness*
 “ of heart with thee, *1 Kings iii. 6.*

“ Blessed are they that *keep his testimonies*, and
 “ that *seek him* with the whole heart.—Thou hast
 “ commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.
 “ —I have rejoiced in the way of *thy testimonies* as
 “ much as in all riches.—Depart from me, ye evil
 “ doers, for *I will keep* the commandments of my
 “ GOD—Salvation is far from the wicked, for
 “ they *seek not* thy statutes.—Lord, I have hoped
 “ for thy *salvation*, and done thy *commandments*,
 “ &c. *Psal. cxix. 2, 4, 14, 115, 155, 166.*

“ In the way of *righteousness* is life, and in the
 “ path-way thereof is no death, *Prov. xii. 28.*

“ Whoso *despiset* the word shall be destroyed:
 “ But he that *feareth the commandment* shall be
 “ rewarded, *Prov. xiii. 13.*

“ Now also the ax is laid to the root of the
 “ trees: Therefore every tree which bringeth not
 “ forth *good fruit* is hewn down, and cast into
 “ the fire.—His fan is in his hand, and he will
 “ *thoroughly*

“ throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat
 “ into the garner: But he will burn up *the chaff*
 “ with unquenchable fire, *Matt. iii. 10, 12.*

“ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord,
 “ Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven:
 “ But he that *doth the will* of my Father which
 “ is in heaven, *Matt. vii. 21.*

“ Then said they unto him, what shall we do
 “ that we might work the works of God?—Jesus
 “ said unto them, *This* is the work of God, that
 “ ye *believe on him* whom he hath sent, *John*
 “ *vi. 28, 29.* 1 *John iii. 23.*

“ Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a
 “ conscience *void of offence* towards God, and to-
 “ ward man, *Acts xxiv. 16.*

“ What fruit had ye then in those things
 “ whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of
 “ those things is death—But now being made
 “ free from sin, and become *servants to God*, ye
 “ have your *fruit unto holiness*, and the end ever-
 “ lasting life.—For the wages of sin is death:
 “ But the gift of God is eternal life, through
 “ Jesus Christ our Lord, *Rom. vi. 21—23.*

“ This is the will of God, even your *sanctifica-*
 “ *tion.*—For God hath not called us unto un-
 “ cleanness, but unto *holiness*, 1 *Thess. iv. 3, 7.*

“ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glori-
 “ ous appearing of the great God, and our Savi-
 “ our *Jesus Christ*:—Who gave himself for us,
 “ that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity, and
 “ *purify* unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of
 “ good works, *Tit. ii. 13, 14.*

“ He suffered.—And being made perfect, he
 “ became the Author of eternal salvation unto all
 “ them that *obey him*, *Heb. v. 8, 9.*

“ Follow

Of leaving our Callings.

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- “ Follow peace with all men, and holiness,
“ without which no man shall see the Lord.—
“ Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the
“ grace of God, &c. *Heb. xii. 14, 15.*
“ The day of the Lord will come as a thief in
“ the night, in which the heavens shall pass away
“ with a great noise, &c.—Seeing then that all
“ these things shall be dissolved, what manner of
“ persons ought ye to be in *all holy conversation*
“ and godliness? *2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.*”
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C H A P. IX.

Of leaving our Callings.

*Consideration to be used therein.—Cases where-
in it may be allowable. As when superior
authority requires it; when persons are
totally disabled by diseases of body or mind;
when unsurmountable difficulties attend our
callings: or age obliges, or estate enables us
to quit them.—Preparation for death
urged, in person and estate.*

WE come in the last place to consider in
what cases it is allowable and fit for per-
sons to *leave* their callings. Necessary and impor-
tant occasions may detain or divert the Tradesman
from his business, as the restoration of his health,
and various other occurrences which happen in
life; or he may for wise reasons contract his
trade, and lessen the cares and labours that at-
tend it: but what I mean, is the *wholly forsaking*
of business; which is a great and important affair,
and should never be done without due considera-
tion.

tion and advice. Present *impulses*, or the tolerable *inconveniences* of trade, can never justify such a conduct, unless the rules of wisdom and prudence concur. How far *wealth*, or the love of a *retired* life may justify it, was considered in the *first* part of this essay. In some cases no doubt it is allowable, of which I apprehend are these that follow.

1st, When *superior authority* requires it. Thus a *wife* may allowably forsake the calling wherein she has been educated, when her husband finds any considerable *inconveniences* therein, or needs her assistance some other way. — The *subject*, being called and advanced to some place of honourable employment and trust in the government, may lawfully *leave* his former calling, because this is supposed to tend more to the public good. — In like manner, when persons are put under *restraint* or *confinement*, either by the magistrate, or by the suit of an adversary, he is so long at least discharged from his former calling, and possibly rendered incapable thereby from ever following it again.

2d, When persons are *totally disabled* by the diseases of *body* or *mind*. It is not every distemper or pain of *body*, which will justify the deserting our stations in life; for diseases are inseparable from some constitutions, and from some callings too: And considering the curious frame of the bodies of men, and the irregularities of their appetites and passions; we have more cause to admire at *one* day's vigour and health, than an *hundred* days sickness and pain: But the aged or infirm Tradesman may, like the pilot in the ship, be serviceable in his profession by his *advice* and *direction*,

now, when he cannot employ his *active powers* of strength and labour. That *disability* only releases the Tradesman from his calling which renders him incapable of following it to those ends for which they are managed: When his body suffers on the one hand, and his employment on the other, and there is no rational prospect of being restored to a capacity for it: In this case, God by his providence releases him from his calling; it becomes a necessary cessation, and not a criminal indulgence.—Let the younger Tradesman consider this, and be *provident* for the future; let him not spend his income as fast as it arises, but in dependence upon the divine providence, and in a prudent and charitable use of what he possesses; let him remember the days of evil, for they may be many: Particularly let him be watchful against that intemperance and vice, which ruins both health and substance too.

3d, *Incapacity of mind*, may also discharge persons from their stations and callings. Not that every trouble of mind, or melancholy humour, will excuse us from attending to the proper business of life: The means must be used, and remedies applied; the divine, and the physician consulted, and it may be no remedy is more successful for the cure, (under the blessing of heaven) than an *honest diligence* in our callings. But when reason is *utterly clouded*, or the faculties so enfeebled, that there is *no prospect* of future capacity, that is a sufficient discharge.—Since this is an affliction so grievous in its nature, and hurtful in its consequences, let the Tradesman beware of those things which introduce it. Subdue *high passions*, either of love, anger, or fear. *Provoke not* God and conscience, by violations of truth, justice and religion;

religion;—Beware of *worldly sorrow*, pore not upon losses and disappointments;—Grasp not at *more business* than your minds or circumstances can bear;—*Abuse* not your parts, nor meddle with *abstruse speculations*, or things that are too high for you; but be humble:—Maintain an *innocent cheerfulness* in every condition; labour to insure to yourselves the *comforts* of religion; and habituate yourselves to temperance and exercise of body, and you will be safe from this calamity, which renders so many a terror to themselves, and a grief to all around them.

4th, When *misfortunes in trade* have rendered them incapable of being carried on. It is not *every loss* or *abatement* of trade or substance, that will justify the *forsaking* our callings; many have been reduced to a very low ebb, who by the blessing of providence, and their own care and industry, have recovered themselves, and made considerable acquisitions of estate; But when business requires that substance to carry it on, which by losses and other occurrences we are *dispossessed of*, and the maintenance of our callings oblige us to contract debts which we are *unlikely to repay*, justice and prudence require the cessation from them. In these cases, a person does not properly leave his calling, but his calling leaves him.—Under these circumstances, it becomes a Tradesman to *review* his past behaviour, and see, whether a criminal neglect of God, injustice and oppression of others, or some sinful indulgences, or extravagance, has not procured this evil to him; lest those sins which have driven him from his shop, exclude him from *heaven* also.

5th, Tradesmen may allowably *leave their callings*, when a considerable degree of *age* and *estate* inclines

inclines and capacitates them so to do. It is not only lawful, but becoming in those who are *advanced in wealth*, and *declining in years*, to make room for the increase of younger Tradesmen; and not like aged trees, stand to obstruct the growth of those below them: An increasing love of wealth in the decline of life, is a sight shocking to human nature*.—But then the retired Tradesman should remember, that though he is discharged from the *fatigues* of life, he is not so from the *duties* of it. His leisure should be employed in preparing his mind for another state, in acts of benevolence and kindness to others; in pointing out to younger persons the paths of virtue and prosperity, and not used only as an indulgence to sloth and sensuality; lest he come under the character of the *fool*, who “said to his soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years;” and knew no other use of them than to “eat, drink, and be merry;” instead of being *rich toward God* (b).

5th, Lastly, Any of these appear to be sufficient causes for resigning a trade, and there may be others; but while the tradesman meets with nothing to recommend or warrant a voluntary retreat from business, while he is pursuing it with the greatest cheerfulness, diligence and success, let him ever bear it in mind that *Death* will soon discharge

* Tottering o’er the grave,
 Shall we, shall aged men, like aged trees,
 Strike deeper their base root, and closer cling,
 Still more enamour’d of this wretched soil?
 Shall our pale withered hands, be stretch’d out still
 Trembling at once with eagerness and age?
 With av’rice, and convulsions, grasping hard?
 Grasping at air! for what has earth beside?

Night Thoughts.

(b) Luke xii. 19.

charge him from his employment whatever it be. This puts an end to all our cares and labours; “ Our breath goeth forth, we return to the earth, “ and in that very day all our thoughts and con- “ cerns for this life perish (c).” This day will surely come, and it often comes when it is least expected. Therefore let the *Tradesman* be advised, to set his *soul in order* for it. What madness and folly is it to live unconcernedly in a condition, when we know not but the next day or hour, may introduce us into inevitable misery and destruction! What senseless stupidity has seized the minds of sinners, that they can stand secure on the brink of such a precipice! For to use the words of an *eminent divine*, “ When God hath been pleased in infinite mercy, “ so clearly to reveal the happiness of heaven, and “ the miseries of hell; if men were not amazingly “ stupified by sin, they could never possess a mo- “ ment’s ease until they had some *comfortable* “ *certainty* of enjoying the one, and escaping the “ other. How can persons preserve their minds “ from terror and amazement, when they think “ of a just and holy God, and know not but He “ is their *enemy*? How can they open the Bible with “ comfort, when they know not but they read “ their *own condemnation* in every page? One “ would think, that the uncertainty of their own “ salvation, should keep them *waking*, or amaze “ them in *dreams*, and disturb their *sleep*; when “ they know not if they shut their eyes, but they “ may *awake in torments*: And that the prospect of “ death and judgment, as *near* and *sure*, should “ fill them with horror and astonishment. In- “ deed, if the uncertainty was constrained, or the “ case remediless, it must then be born as other

“ UR.

(c) Psal. cxlvi. 4.

“ unavoidable evils are ; but when the *kind offers*
 “ of mercy and grace through Jesus Christ
 “ made to repenting and believing sinners ; and
 “ the *characters* of those who are in a state of sal-
 “ vation or condemnation, are so *plainly described*
 “ in the gospel, that if men would with seriousness
 “ first search the *scriptures*, and then faithfully
 “ examine their *own hearts* by them, they might
 “ see which state they belong unto ; nothing but
 “ unaccountable stupidity, can cause persons to
 “ live negligent of their great concern, or con-
 “ tent themselves in uncertainty of the awful con-
 “ sequences of death.” Never rest therefore,
 until your peace be made with God through
 Jesus Christ, and your heart purified from every
 corrupt affection by his Spirit of grace, and then
death may be viewed with peace, and embraced
 with joy.

And, to conclude, the same prospect of *death*,
 and uncertainty of life, should induce every con-
 siderate Tradesman to set his *house in order*. Let
 your books, and accounts be kept as clear and even
 as may be ; suffer not long reckonings to lie dor-
 mant between yourself and others ; for these will
 prove very *troublesome*, or it may be very *prejudi-
 cial* to those you leave behind : And after you have
 computed, as near as may be, the true value of
 your estates, *make your Will*. Death will be more
 easy, but not a minute the nearer for doing this.
 After you have settled a reasonable portion upon
 your wife and children, if God has so far blessed
 you, let your poor relations be remembered by
 you ; and forget not to acknowledge the goodness
 of divine providence, by dedicating some part of
 your gains to pious and charitable uses ; this, if it
 is done from a principle of faith and love, will
 be

be the best means to entail a blessing upon what you leave to your posterity. Being thus prepared by *internal* piety and *external* prudence, *death* may be expected, but need not to be feared: You may then chearfully leave your calling on earth, to receive “the prize of the high calling of God, in “Christ Jesus our Lord.” To whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

“O that they were wise, that they understood
“this, that they would consider their *latter end*,
“Deut. xxxii. 29.

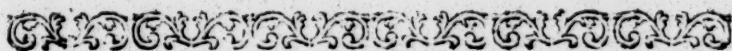
“If a man die, shall he live again? All the
“days of my appointed time *will I wait* till my
“change come, *Job* xiv. 14.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it *with*
“thy *might*; for there is no work, nor knowledge,
“nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither
“thou goest, *Eccles.* ix. 10.

“In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death:
“and Isaiah the prophet came unto him, and
“said, Thus saith the Lord, set thine *house in order*,
“for thou shalt die, and not live, *Isa.* xxxviii. 1.

“I am now ready to be offered; and the time of
“my departure *is at hand*.—I have fought a good
“fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the
“faith.—Henceforth there is laid up for me a
“crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the
“righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day, and
“to them also that *love his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 7.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,
“from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that
“they may rest from their labours, and their
“works *do follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13.



A N

A P P E N D I X,

*Shewing the only way to obtain power for
Christian duties, or the necessity of a change
of state and nature, before we can ac-
ceptably serve God, and prac-
tice the precepts of
Religion.*

IT is the common error of many, when their consciences are convinced of the excellency and necessity of christian duties, to rush immediately upon the practice of them in their *own strength and natural state*; and not attending to the method and order, which the infinite wisdom and mercy of God has established in the gospel for obtaining holiness and happiness through Christ Jesus, they often labour long and zealously in religion *without effect*. Whereas until the *person* of sinners are reconciled to God, and justified by his grace through Jesus Christ; and then by virtue of *union* to the Lord Jesus and *faith* in him, they derive from him the Spirit of life and holiness, it is impossible they should please God, or find acceptance with him, *Rom. v. 1. John xv. 5.* For, 1st; (as was before observed) our natural state is a state of *enmity against* God, and is *not subject* to his holy and spiritual government, neither indeed *can be*, *Rom. viii. 6—8.* And there is an *evil inclination* in us by nature which tendeth powerfully to sin, *sub-*
I *sum*

duing and captivating us to the love and practice of it, Rom. vii. 20—23. Inſomuch that we muſt be born of the Spirit, becauſe we can live a ſpiritual life, John iii. 3—6. And be created again in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, before we can have power to perform them, Eph. ii. 10.—2d, While we remain in our natural ſtate, we are under the curſe of God for all our ſins, John iii. 18. Eph. ii. 3. The benefit of remiſſion of ſins, and freedom from condemnation, is not given unto us in our unrenewed ſtate, but only in Chriſt Jeſus, through faith in Him, Rom. viii. 1. Eph. i. 7. How can we imagine, therefore, to ſubdue ſin, and practice holineſs, while God is againſt us, and curſeth us?—3d, As we are by nature children of wrath, ſo we are under the power and influence of the devil; that evil ſpirit, who ſecretly worketh and ruleth in all the children of diſobedience, Eph. ii. 2—5. from which ſpiritual bondage and captivity we are only delivered by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, through faith, Acts xxvi. 18.

So that if you aim at pleaſing God, or obeying His will, without firſt ſeeking juſtification by Chriſt's precious blood and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification by his holy Spirit, you will find both wind and tide againſt you. Your corrupted natures, guilty conſciences, and Satan's power and malice, will certainly defeat and bring to nought all your purpoſes and attempts to love God and ſerve him in ſincerity and truth, Luke xiii. 24.

This glorious privilege of fellowſhip with Chriſt Jeſus, whereby believers are enabled to perform acceptable obedience to God, is moſt freely offered to all ſinners of mankind, who, ſenſible of their *neceſſitous, helpleſs, and loſt* ſtate and condition in
them-

themselves, are sincerely willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as their only and all-sufficient Saviour, and all-wise Disposer and Governor, *Isa.* lv. 1—5. *John* vi. 37—40.—If you thus seek to please God through faith in Christ Jesus, (in the diligent use of the means of grace) hoping for all wisdom and strength *only from him*, *1 Cor.* i. 29. Trust assuredly, that he will *enable you to do* every thing that is necessary for his glory and your own happiness; pardoning your failings, and comforting your hearts by his love and grace, *1 Cor.* i. 7—9. *Gal.* v. 17.

When you have *done all you can* in the service of God, be sure to look for salvation and happiness only as the *free gift of God's grace* in Christ Jesus: and not as *merited or deserved by your obedience*, *Rom.* iii. 24—28. *Gal.* iii. 18, 22. Those who endeavour (either in whole or in part) to procure for themselves a right to salvation and eternal life, by their obedience to God's commands, do seek salvation by the *works of the law*, and not by the *faith of Jesus Christ*, and will never obtain it by these means. For this is a *great and fundamental error* in religion, destroying the souls of men, *Luke* xviii. 9—14. *Gal.* iii. 10—12. For, 1. It directly opposes the design of God in man's salvation, which is to glorify his own free mercy and rich grace in Christ Jesus, *Eph.* ii. 9. —2. It makes void the precious sacrifice and justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whosoever thus seek to be justified *by the law*, they are fallen from *grace*: Christ is become of no effect unto them, and profiteth them nothing, *Gal.* v. 2, 4. ch. iii. 11—22.

Depending on our own obedience for salvation, is a very sinful, as well as a fruitless confidence. It

is *despising* and *contradicting* all the infinite perfections of God displayed in man's recovery. His glorious mercy, unsearchable wisdom, awful justice, &c. *Rom. iii. 21—26.*—It is concerning the *authority* of God, who commands us to *believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, that we may be saved, *1 John iii. 23*—It is denying the *truth* of God, in *not believing the record* which He hath given us of eternal life in his Son, *1 John v. 10, 11.*—It is trampling upon the *unsearchable riches* of the Redeemer's love and goodness in his great undertaking; and setting up our own *perverse wills* and *foolish conceits* in opposition to the counsel of God.

Let every one be persuaded, therefore, (as they value their present comfort and everlasting happiness) to seek for salvation and holiness in this way of *faith* and *self-denial*; receiving them as the *free gift* of God in Christ Jesus. By faith laying hold on the infinite grace, mercy and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to *justify* and *sanctify* them. Which hath this excellent property, that it is a *sure*, and effectually *powerful*, *easy* and *comfortable* way to all holiness and happiness; being prescribed by the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God himself. All other ways being weak and insufficient; strengthening rather than subduing *sin*, and ending in *despair*.—*And thus doing you will be blessed for ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.

